

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1427443

BX  
9803  
U77  
1958  
v.12:1



The Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

*The*  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
*of the*  
**Unitarian Historical Society**

---

THE HISTORIAN'S HISTORY:  
A PATHWAY TO FREEDOM

BY SIDNEY E. MEAD, PH.D.

AN ADDRESS TO UNITARIANS

BY SIDNEY E. MEAD, PH.D.

MARION FRANKLIN HAM

BY HENRY WILDER FOOTE, S.T.D., D.D.

UNITARIANA

BY HOLLEY M. SHEPHERD, S.T.B.

*An Historical Essay:*

THE MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION  
OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS

BY HAROLD F. WORTHLEY, S.T.B.

1958

VOLUME XII • PART I



B X  
9813  
U 77  
1958  
v. 12:1

*The*

# PROCEEDINGS

*of the*

Unitarian Historical Society

1958

VOLUME XII • PART I

Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California

Copyright 1958

By the Unitarian Historical Society



# CONTENTS — 1958

Directory of the Unitarian Historical Society .....	iv
Editor's Note — The Present State of Unitarian and Universalist Historical Studies .....	vii
The Historian's History: A Pathway to Freedom .....	1
Sidney E. Mead, Ph.D.	
An Address to Unitarians .....	12
Sidney E. Mead, Ph.D.	
Marion Franklin Ham .....	23
Henry Wilder Foote, S.T.D., D.D.	
Unitariana .....	27
Holley M. Shepherd, S.T.B.	
An Historical Essay: The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers .....	47
Harold F. Worthley, S.T.B.	
Annual Meeting 1957 .....	105
Notice of available back issues of the <i>Proceedings</i> .....	106

# THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## OFFICERS 1957-58

### PRESIDENT

Rev. Duncan Howlett, LL.D.

First Church in Boston

64 Marlborough St.

### VICE PRESIDENT

Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, S.T.D., D.D.

22 Highland St.

Cambridge 38, Mass.

### SECRETARY

Rev. David B. Parke

21 Pine St.

Peterborough, N. H.

### TREASURER

Dudley Huntington Dorr

60 State St.

Boston 9, Mass.

### LIBRARIAN

Mrs. Martha S. C. Wilson

25 Beacon St.

Boston 8, Mass.

### DIRECTORS

Rev. Frederick L. Weis, Th.D., Peterborough, N. H. .... 1955 - 1958

Rev. Robert D. Richardson, Concord, Mass. .... 1955 - 1958

Prof. George H. Williams, Th.D., Cambridge, Mass. .... 1956 - 1959

Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, D.D., Boston, Mass. .... 1956 - 1959

C. Conrad Wright, Ph.D., Cambridge, Mass. .... 1957 - 1960

Stephen Phillips, Salem, Mass. .... 1957 - 1960

### HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS

Rev. Arnold Crompton, Th.D.

685 14th St.

Oakland 12, Calif.

Prof. Sidney E. Mead, Ph.D.

5701 Woodlawn Ave.

Chicago 37, Ill.



*THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY* was founded in 1901 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society's collection is housed at the Unitarian Historical Library, 25 Beacon St., Boston. Books may be consulted at the Library, and certain volumes are available on Inter-Library Loan. For information consult the Librarian.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join should send their membership fee to the Treasurer, as follows:

Annual membership .....	\$ 2.00
Sustaining membership .....	\$10.00
Life membership .....	\$50.00

Each member receives a copy of the *Proceedings*. About 125 copies are sent to libraries.

THE PROCEEDINGS  
*of the*  
UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITOR

Rev. David B. Parke  
21 Pine St.  
Peterborough, N. H.

BOOK REVIEW EDITORS

Prof. George H. Williams  
45 Francis Ave.  
Cambridge 38, Mass.

Dr. C. Conrad Wright  
45 Francis Ave.  
Cambridge 38, Mass.

EDITORIAL BOARD

The Officers and Directors

The editors welcome review copies of new books.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

THERE are evidences that Unitarianism has entered a new era in historiography. The death in January 1956 of Earl Morse Wilbur marked the close of a previous era which Dr. Wilbur himself dominated — that of the collection and collation of source materials from two continents. The sources having been sought out and brought together, it follows that (although the intensive gathering and cataloging of source materials must continue) the present task is fundamentally one of interpretation, reconstruction and synthesis. There can be no doubt that the best of the new writing is more penetrating than much of what preceded it; such works as Conrad Wright's *Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*, the first in a projected multi-volume history, reveal the depth, scope and competence of the new history. An additional indication of the new importance of history to the liberal religious movement is the ascendancy in the past five years of historians to the leadership of two of our oldest theological schools — George H. Williams as acting dean of the Harvard Divinity School prior to the appointment of Douglas Horton, and Sidney E. Mead as president of Meadville.

In the conviction that a new phase in Unitarian historical writing is already upon us, and that the Unitarian Historical Society can and should play a central role in its development, I have thought that a brief survey of the present state of Unitarian and Universalist historical studies would be of value. The survey is intended to be representative, not exhaustive.

**BOOKS.** A listing of recent books in the field indicates the breadth of publishing that is underway. In addition to the works cited in Mr. Shepherd's paper (see below, pp. 27-46), the following may be mentioned: Franklin H. Littell, *The Free Church*; Stanislas Kot, *Socinianism in Poland: The Social and Political Ideas of the Polish Antitrinitarians 1550-1650* (translated from the Polish by E. M. Wilbur); and Mr. Littell's *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (second edition, revised and enlarged), which is due in July. All are published by the Beacon Press. Harper recently reprinted Roland Bainton's *The Travail of Religious Liberty* in its Torchbook series. The twenty-fifth anniversary volume of the Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, edited by Frederick Lewis Weis and Dudley Huntington Dorr, will include sections on the clergy, congregations and church buildings of colonial America. It is to be published this Spring.

Major reviews of Unitarian historical writing 1939-to-present are now in preparation by George H. Williams and Conrad Wright, the Book Review editors of the *Proceedings*. These comprehensive reviews of both European and American historical literature will appear in the 1959 issue, bringing us up to date and making possible current book reviews beginning with the 1960 issue.

*ARTICLES.* Dr. Williams' article in *Church History*, "Studies in the Radical Reformation (1517-1618): A Bibliographical Survey of Research Since 1939," XXVII (March and June, 1958) will be of utmost value to students of Unitarian history; also his contribution to a Polish volume edited by Ludwik Chmaj (Warsaw, 1958), "Anabaptism and Spiritualism in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: An Obscure Phase of the Pre-History of Socinianism," which is being considered for publication in a future issue of the *Proceedings*.

Articles appearing in the *Proceedings* since World War II are listed on page 106. The *Transactions* of the Unitarian Historical Society (England) contain other valuable articles in the field.

The *Unitarian Register* (formerly the *Christian Register*) continues to publish articles of historical interest while providing an invaluable record of contemporary history in the making. The November 1954 issue commemorated the 375th anniversary of Francis David's death (1579) in articles by Vilma Szantho Harrington, John Howland Lathrop and Alexander St.-Ivanyi. In November 1955 David B. Parke discussed the 1955 Lutheran heresy trial in Wisconsin in the context of Unitarian history. In the issue of December 1957 Laurence Staples describes the unique religious views of Ethan Allen of Vermont.

A fresh perspective on Hosea Ballou, the American Universalist leader, is contained in Ernest Cassara's "Hosea Ballou and the Rise of American Religious Liberalism" in the *Universalist Leader*, April 1958. This will be reprinted in pamphlet form by the Universalist Historical Society, before whom it was read as the annual lecture in Atlantic City in October 1957. Cassara is contributing the historical chapter to a new publication, "Universalism — A Religion for Man" (comparable to "A Pocket Guide to Unitarianism") and has been invited to prepare an article on Ballou for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

A significant development is the number of articles on Unitarian and proto-Unitarian themes by non-Unitarian historians. An example is the fact that the renascent interest in Channing, as discussed by Dr. Wright at the Society's January 1957 seminar, finds primary expression in studies by non-Unitarians.

*RESEARCH IN PROGRESS.* Current research in Unitarian-Universalist history extends from Francis David to the Unitarian fellowships movement. Dr. St.-Ivanyi, minister of the First Church of Christ in Lancaster and of the First Unitarian Church of Clinton, Mass., is at work on a biography of Francis David and a broader work on Transylvanian Unitarianism. A number of Dr. St.-Ivanyi's former colleagues in Hungary, under the leadership of the Rev. Janos Szasz, are carrying forward a study of early Unitarian history in the context of the problem of the origin of religion itself. An early report in the *Proceedings* is hoped for.

Joseph Barth's 1956 Minns lectures, "Toward a Doctrine of the Liberal Church," were at once the fruition of two decades of study and the prolegomena to a larger work forthcoming. John W. Laws has completed an introductory systematic theology of the liberal movement, now in manuscript under the title "Great Meanings."

Dr. Arnold Crompton of Oakland, California is pursuing his study of Unitarianism on the Pacific Coast, the first phase of which is so ably chronicled in his recent book of the same title. The Rev. Paul Hayes, a student at the Starr King School for the Ministry at Berkeley, has centered on James Freeman Clarke as the subject of his Ph.D. program in Christian doctrine at the Pacific School of Religion. In this connection readers of the *Proceedings* will be pleased to learn that the irreplaceable Earl Morse Wilbur collection of Unitariana at Starr King is now housed in a fireproof library building. (Dr. Wilbur served as dean and later president of the Pacific Unitarian School for the Ministry, now Starr King, from 1904 to 1931.)

Mrs. Josiah R. Bartlett, whose preliminary account of the origins of the Unitarian fellowships movement aroused intense interest last year, is developing her research into a major study. Mrs. Bartlett's work, which is not part of a degree program, will be informed by principles of sociology and all of the available documents of the first decade of the fellowships program.

Clinton Lee Scott, following on the publication of his *The Universalist Church of America: A Short History* (1957), is at work on a comprehensive history of Universalism in America. Cassara, Scott and Alfred S. Cole thus stand as the leading historians of Universalism today.

Representative of undergraduate research in Unitarian history is a study by Richard A. Kellaway, an Antioch graduate who has served as director of the Channing-Murray Foundation at the University of Illinois while pursuing a post-graduate course in history. His paper, "Dr. Channing and the 'Party of Progress,'" written at Antioch, concludes:

Channing's fundamental belief in the free mind principle more than anything else drove him away from the growing orthodoxy of the Unitarian movement. If he did not then completely embrace the 'Party of the Future' either, it can be partially attributed to his dislike of active association in movements. Philosophically, Channing was not a complete Transcendentalist; his attempt to hold together Christian, rationalistic, and Transcendental elements made this impossible. But in attitude he expressed a position which was later to become formalized in the Transcendental philosophy. Hence Emerson could call him 'our bishop' — even though Channing could never completely accept the results. And if he could publicly defend Theodore Parker's right to preach at the same time that he was criticizing several of Parker's doctrines, it was because of his life-long practice of a rare belief among churchmen of any age — that of the free human mind.

**COURSES AND PLANS.** A Meadville Theological School course on Denominations of the Liberal Tradition in America, taught by Sidney Mead, had an enrollment this year of twelve, four of whom were Unitarians while eight were graduate students from the Federated Theological Faculty or the History Department of the University of Chicago. Dr. Mead is hopeful that some original papers and perhaps a thesis may emerge from the course.

Crane Theological School of Tufts University will offer a summer school course in the History of Universalism and Unitarianism beginning June 30, 1958 for six weeks. Dean Benjamin B. Hersey is the instructor. Future plans call for a course by Ernest Cassara on the rise of American religious liberalism and a research seminar for advanced studies in the original sources of liberal religious history.

The Starr King School will offer a summer course on European Liberalism Today beginning July 14 for three weeks. The instructors are Dr. S. van der Woude, assistant director of the University Library in Amsterdam and Prof. Hans Casparis, president of Albert Schweitzer College in Chur-



walden, Switzerland. While in Berkeley Dr. van der Woude, a specialist in the Continental Reformation, will survey the Starr King library and make recommendations to the School on how it can be strengthened.

Starr King's expansion program calls for the eventual establishment of two professorships — one in philosophy and theology, one in church history, the latter to include responsibility for overseeing the Wilbur collection. Harvard Divinity School's hopes and plans in Unitarian history are detailed in Holley Shepherd's article below. Meadville recently announced plans for a major fund drive to create a William Ellery Channing professorship in the History of Religions in the Federated Theological Faculty.

*OTHER EFFORTS.* The ongoing study of Unitarian history in churches and fellowships assumes the form of data-gathering, sermons, religious education courses, youth group meetings, Lenten lectures, orientation discussions for new members and, at the First Church in Salem, Mass. under the leadership of the Rev. Bradford E. Gale, D.D., a Unitarian Classics group: The group devotes one evening a month to study and discussion of a text, concluding in the Spring with an "Evening with the Author" — in 1957 Conrad Wright, in 1958 David B. Parke.

Mr. Parke's *The Epic of Unitarianism* has been rendered into dramatic form for use with a Junior High church school class by Mr. Robert MacClinchie of the Unitarian church of Arlington, Virginia. In addition, the final chapter of his compilation, entitled "Humanism and Theism in a New Age" is being translated into German under the auspices of the Unitarian church of Berlin, the Rev. Hans-Georg Remus, minister, for distribution in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. If sufficient funds become available, the entire work will be translated and republished.

*THE FUTURE.* The importance of keeping complete and accurate church records, including minutes, membership records, orders of service, newsletters and programs of special events, cannot be overestimated. An inquiry to one of the seminaries concerning the types of cumulative historical materials it wishes to receive is a simple step every minister and parish can take. Surely it is better to place too much data in the hands of future Unitarian historians than too little, or none at all.

Dr. Wilbur at the end of his article, "How the History Came to be Written," (*Proceedings*, Vol. IX, Part I, 1951) listed a number of historical

topics he hoped would be explored by future students of Unitarian history. Today studies are needed in such areas as the role of the Italian spiritualists and antitrinitarians in the rise of Unitarianism, the influence of Laelius Socinus on his nephew Faustus, the significance of Acontius for the Unitarian movement, the relationships of Deists, Arminians and Unitarians in England and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Unitarianism of Locke and Jefferson, the impact of Biblical criticism on Channing, the character and thought of Joseph Stevens Buckminster, Moncure D. Conway and Henry W. Bellows, the specific influence of Unitarian ideas on the literary explosion of nineteenth century New England, the historic connections between Unitarianism and Universalism, the history of Unitarianism in the South, the development of liberal Christianity in India and Japan, the history of the I. A. R. F., the origins and development of religious humanism, the social action movement in American Unitarianism, and the impact of twentieth century civilization on Unitarianism, with reference to pacifism, humanism, existentialism and the Frederick May Eliot years.

The Society seeks to present at its seminars and/or publish in the *Proceedings* as many papers as its funds will permit. Members can help in this task by maintaining their own memberships at an active level, by securing new members for the Society, and by notifying the editor of new research and publications in the field of Unitarian history.

---

This issue of the *Proceedings* is the largest in the journal's history. The publication of Mr. Worthley's paper on the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers (see below, pp. 47-103) was made possible by a generous grant from the Convention.

DAVID B. PARKE

April 22, 1958

Peterborough, New Hampshire

# THE HISTORIAN'S HISTORY: A PATHWAY TO FREEDOM<sup>1</sup>

BY SIDNEY E. MEAD, PH.D.

President of The Meadville Theological School

*To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,  
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.*

— WALT WHITMAN, "Song of Myself"

I was asked to speak on "The Importance of Historical Studies for the Liberal Religious Movement."\* The gist of my argument is that they are important because their end or goal is self-knowledge of a kind that liberates an individual from unconscious bondage to the community that has formed him and places him in a position to "prove all things," even the elements of the tradition in which he has been nurtured. The individual thus liberated is free to choose, and indeed must choose, from among the many possibilities offered him, to the end that he may "hold fast that which is good." This thesis will be developed by expounding a view of the nature of historical studies and of human freedom which suggests that the former is a natural pathway to the latter.

## I

The historian's history originates in curiosity about the past. Where there is no curiosity about the past — and such absence is not uncommon in America for many reasons — there can be no historical quest or writing. Neither, of course, can there be any appreciation of the nature of historical studies or interest in them. But where such curiosity exists, it is manifested in questions. Back of every history is a question. The type-question is, "How did I or we or they get that way?" Or, "How did *this* present come to be out of *that* past?" The first step in understanding any history is to try to ascertain what question the author intended to answer. This is also the first step in judging the quality of any history, since clear and definite answers can be expected only if there are clear and definite questions. Many histories are vitiated by the vagueness or foolishness of the question or questions the author had in mind.

Since the questions of a period grow out of that period's interests, the questions deemed significant by historians change with changing times. Hence much of the history written in one era does not interest the people of a later era because they are no longer concerned with the questions their forebears chose to ask. And in history, as elsewhere, nothing is as useless

---

\* Delivered as the main address at the fifty-seventh annual meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society, May 27, 1957 in the Edward Everett Hale Chapel of the First Church in Boston.

as the answer to a question that no one is asking. This is one basic reason why students sometimes are not interested in history as taught in the classroom. It is also a basic reason why histories must continually be rewritten.

Commonly there is a very practical reason for the questions — namely, people want to understand the present situation in such fashion as to suggest to them what they can and ought to do. Abraham Lincoln was right — and this makes him my ideal historian — when he suggested that the definition of “what to do and how to do it” waits upon a decision regarding “where we are and whither we are tending.” And I believe that he was also right when he told the ministers who waited upon him that he could not expect “a direct revelation” of “where we are and whither we are tending,” but must depend upon a “study of the plain physical facts of the case.” This is to say that the only possible answer to the question “where we are and whither we are tending” as well as the answer to the question, “what to do and how to do it” is arrived at through the interpretation of the history-that-happens.

You will recall that Lincoln in his “House Divided” speech, after laying down these basic principles, proceeded to a very acute historical analysis of the immediate past in such fashion as to make clear his conclusion about where they were and whither tending. And when this was clear, what they should do and how they should do it were also perfectly clear.

The obverse of what I have said is that every history is essentially an assertion in the form of a *thesis* constituting a plausible answer to a question about the past (where “thesis” means a proposition advanced and defended according to accepted rules of evidence). The totality of such assertions constitutes the body of historical knowledge. This is to say that the body of historical knowledge is not a vast, static, accumulation of established facts resembling a pile of stones, but rather a dynamic, moving, interlocking series of theses, each only as reliable as the evidence upon which it is based. Nor is the historian a quarryman engaged in digging out new facts — where no one ever dug before — to be trundled in his wheelbarrow to the pile already accumulated and dumped on. The collection, preparation, and display of “remains,” although very important, is not the writing of history any more than the undertaker’s peculiar work is the preaching of significant funeral sermons. History is active thinking about the meaning of the past.

These assertions, which compose the content of historical knowledge concern three aspects of human life. First, there are assertions about the activities of people done in the past — that is about what people did and when they did it. For example,

Columbus sailed the ocean blue

In fourteen hundred ninety-two.

It will be seen that this simple stanza is an assertion in the form of a thesis,

based upon the interpretation of evidence, in answer to a question about "who," "what," and "when."

But, aside from those with minds incapable of being bored, people want to know more than just "who," "what," and "when." They ask, "Why?" Why did Columbus go to all that bother? When one asks this type of question, he really wants to know what was in the mind of this man? What were his motives?

Hence, second, historians formulate assertions about what an individual thought he was doing, judging both by what he did and said. In answer to direct questions people explain their actions by pointing to the motives that lay back of them, as you will realize if you ask such questions as, "Why did you come to this meeting?" This is to reject the rather prevalent view that one explains human actions merely by placing them in a chronological sequence.

Historians, I think, attempt to explain the actions of people of the past by determining their motives. But to determine the motives even of a contemporary, whom we may directly question, is by no means simple, and depends upon a great deal of conjecture and inference. It is doubly difficult to determine the motives of a figure of the past, since he must be judged on the basis of what footprints he happens to have left on the sands of time. Here the common temptation is to project into a character of the past what the historian thinks his own motives would have been in the performance of similar actions. One of the best clues to a person's character is his opinions about the motives of others, past or present. In any case, the historian's view of the motives of men — and hence his answers to the "why" question — is always limited by his conception of the nature of man and of what really motivates him.

From every period and area of civilization, individuals, speaking out of a community, have left a more or less self-consciously articulated and logically systematized explanation of what they thought they were doing and why. This may range all the way from very simple theories about social, religious, political, and economic matters to philosophy and theology in the grand tradition. By generalizing about what seem to be common elements in such explanatory records, a period or era is given a particular character which distinguishes it from others. I call the content and way of thinking which thus characterizes an individual, group, or period an ideology.

Third, historians formulate assertions about the unquestioned assumptions which are the foundation of such ideologies. These assumptions are harder to ascertain than matters of ideology because, being unquestioned, they seldom enter self-conscious analysis or articulation. They are obvious — and the statement of the obvious is one of the most difficult of intellectual achievements. But one never fully understands a person or an era until one understands what he or it assumed or presupposed.



It is the assumptions or presuppositions of an era that really give it a general character, since they underlie its ideological differences. Indeed, only the common acceptance of presuppositions makes the reasonable discussion of ideological differences possible. You cannot reason with a person who shares no presuppositions with you. For example, in dealing with the past we commonly assume that the structures and relationships which we observe in our experience have prevailed throughout the past. This is obvious to us, although there seems to be no way of proving it. Hence we cannot reason with a person who does not assume this — who may assume, on the contrary, that at certain times and places in the past the corpse of a British saint did not suffer corruption or that solid metal objects floated on water. Such a person, we would say, does not live in a universe but in a “multiverse.” In his world, unlike in ours, anything can happen.

To say as above that presuppositions give character to a period, is to suggest that presuppositions change. This implies that there is nothing accepted as true by all men in all places and all times. The assertion that such is the case seems to me to be the projection of one's own views on the universe, or wishful thinking on the part of those who cannot tolerate disagreement.

Thus the historian makes assertions, in the form of theses, about these three aspects of human life — activities, ideologies and presuppositions — in answer to the type-questions: What did they do? What did they say they thought they were doing? What did they presuppose? Of necessity he works within the context of the accepted discipline of history which defines his method or approach. His method has two aspects:

First is the aspect of facts. The foundation of all historical work is the establishment of facts. Granted our recognized discipline of history, all acceptable historical knowledge, I suppose, consists in that which meets with the consensus of those trained to be in a position to judge.

The historian turns for answers to what remains of the total past. But he is not content with just any answers. He seeks the right or true answers. And the right or true answer, as in all human knowledge, is the consensus of those in a position to know — the experts. An expert in this sense, is one who has met certain conditions — that is, one who is trained to observe and record the meaning of certain kinds of events — and hence one who has to begin with certain potential capabilities making it possible for him to benefit from such training.

Those in a position to know can arrive at consensus because they accept a common method, and agree to abide by the results it yields. Acceptance of this method defines the historians' objectivity, and means that they share a common arena in which differences of opinion can be adjudicated according to commonly accepted rules of procedure. Objectivity is not indifference to the outcome for the historian any more than for the detective.



As intimated above, a common method implies a common world-view. The two are inseparable. Therefore two historians who do not share a common world-view cannot adjudicate their differences of opinion through appeal to historical evidence. The historian should know when his opponent must be converted and cannot be convinced by the marshalling of historical evidence. For example, the difference between those of us who do and those of us who do not believe in a virgin birth, cannot be resolved by resort to historical method. This fact, however, does not reduce us to individualistic chaos, since, as we shall note below, the acceptance of a world-view, and hence of a method, is not merely a matter of the individual's whimsy. It largely comes to him, and indeed is forced upon him by the common cultural surroundings of his community.

The discreet assertions about activities, ideology, and presuppositions which make up the sum of historical knowledge are to be seen on a continuum, at the one (let us say the left) end of which are those assertions upon which there is no such consensus whatsoever, at the other (or right) end of which are those assertions upon which there is complete consensus. Commonly when we refer to the facts of history, we refer to those assertions that lie well toward the right end of the continuum. But it must be clearly seen that so far as the nature of the knowing is concerned, no distinction can be made between an area of settled facts and an area of interpretations. This means that there are no matters forever settled and beyond question — that no consensus is permanent, and that every history is only an interim report on certain events.

The second aspect of the historians' method is that of interpretation. An interpretation is an assertion about some aspect of the content of the history, stated in the meaningful terminology of the historian's contemporary world-view. Insofar as the historian's world-view differs from the world-view of the period or person being studied, an interpretation is a kind of translation of a past ideology into the terminology of contemporary ideology.

Granted at this point the desirability of maintaining a sense of continuity with the past — and all historical study is founded upon this supposition — this continuity is achieved by interpreting the past in a fashion that can be sympathetically understood and appropriated by modern minds. The past exists only in the mind of the present, and whatever in the past we cannot translate into contemporary ideology can be no part of our historical knowledge.

It is important to keep in mind that interpretation takes place in a contemporary mind, which has its full complement of presuppositions and ideology born to it through the dynamic community in which that mind has been nurtured. Since written history cannot be a description of the infinitesimal detail which constitutes the past, the first step in its production is an act of selection which will be determined by the topography of the mind

which does the selecting. Therefore, one of the basic premises of the historian has been thus stated:

Every written history . . . is a selection of facts made by some person or persons and is ordered or organized under the influence of some scheme of reference, interest, or emphasis . . . in the thought of the author or authors.<sup>2</sup>

Primary here is the historian's conception of the outcome or end of the story he is telling. As A. N. Whitehead said:

The historian in his description of the past depends on his own judgment as to what constitutes the importance of human life. Even when he has vigorously confined himself to one selected aspect, political or cultural, he still depends on some decision as to what constitutes the culmination of that phase of human experience and as to what constitutes its degradation. . . . The whole judgment on thoughts and actions depend upon such implicit presuppositions.<sup>3</sup>

Now then, insofar as a history comes down to the present, the culmination of the story must be an imaginative projection into the future. As is stated in a somewhat epoch-making article on history, ". . . what is basic in that history involves a reference to its predicted outcome." Therefore, the authors add:

Our "emphasis" will be determined by what we find going on in the present. But what we find there is not yet fully worked out. Rather, the present suggests what will eventuate in times to come. Thus we understand what is basic in a history in terms of what we call some "dynamic element" in the present, some "present tendency" directed toward the future. The present is full of such tendencies: it suggests many different possible futures, according as different tendencies now at work prove controlling. The historian selects one of these possible futures as "just around the corner," and uses it as a principle by which to select what is basic among the multitude of facts at his disposal.<sup>4</sup>

And since ". . . the future is not foreseeable in detail . . ." therefore his selection ". . . necessarily involves a certain choice of allegiance, an act of faith in one kind of future rather than another." This is why it can be said that what one sees as important or true in the past depends upon what one wills to prevail in human life. Conversely, the surest clue to what a person really wills to prevail in his life or in human life in general, is what he sees as true about his own past or the history of his community.

There is, then, this sense in which the historian chooses an allegiance. But because he is himself a part of the history-that-happens,

. . . to say that a principle of selection is "chosen" does not mean that such choices are arbitrary. Men do not arbitrarily "choose" their allegiances and faiths, even when they are converts. Their faiths are rather forced upon them. Grace, we are told, is prevenient, and it is God who sends faith.

I am quoting two very "secular" authors, who continue:

The history-that-happens itself generates the faiths and allegiances that furnish the principles for selecting what is important in understanding it. Men do not "choose" arbitrarily to be Catholics — or rugged individualists — any more than they "choose" not to be.<sup>5</sup>

This view, I think, was implicit in our suggestion above, that in answer to the "why did they do it" question, we refer to the motives in the minds of these people. For the more fully we explain "why they did it" in this fashion, the more fully do we explain away the possibility that, granted who and what and where they were, they could have done anything else. I think it can be said that historical studies tend to lead the historian almost inevitably into an appreciative view of necessity — the necessity which Ranke said "inheres in all that has already been formed and that cannot be undone, (and) which is the basis of all new, emerging activity." Personally I have come to the conclusion that any plausible view of the nature of human freedom, must take into account this kind of historical necessity.

But before I turn to that, I want to note that from the conception of the nature of history thus far developed it follows that every written history is at least implicitly an explanation of and apologetic for the selective principle, the allegiance, the faith of the historian. His history is an argument for his selective principle and view of the final outcome of events. No more than other people can the historian escape eschatology.

## II

I began this paper by saying that historical studies are important for the liberal religious movement because their end or goal is self-knowledge of a kind that liberates the individual from bondage to the community and tradition that have formed him. To develop this argument will require some back-tracking, but I hope not too much obvious, that is, boring repetition.

Let us begin with what is meant by world-view. The individual's world-view is his mental habitat — the total mental world of ideology and presuppositions in which he lives. It is defined in part — an important part — by what he will consider possible and impossible, and by what he will accept as a satisfactory explanation of an experience. These constitute important aspects of everyday life.

For example, suppose one of us could stand in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1690 beside a man of that time and place. Both might then observe the same actions of a third person and both ask "Why did she do it?" The man of 1690 would answer, "Because she was possessed by the devil." To him, such spirit possession was possible, and such reference would constitute a satisfactory explanation. But the twentieth-century man would not consider this a satisfactory explanation since he considers such possession impossible. The history that the two men would write would be quite different, though both might describe the same experiences. In the terms used above, they might agree completely on "who," "what," "when," but would disagree radically on "why."

It is also obvious that one's world-view is partly conscious, partly unconscious — partly criticized, we would say, and partly uncriticized. Most people, indeed, live mentally in furnished apartments — furnished that is, by the culture born to them through their community. It is for this reason that it is reasonably safe to generalize regarding the world-view of a time and place — an era, a period, a group.

This means that actually for most people most questions are answered before they are ever self-consciously asked. Indeed, we can imagine a community so stabilized and static that no questions would be asked. For it is only when the routines of a community break down that questions are self-consciously asked and answers self-consciously sought and given.

This is to say that an individual's world-view is "given" at the point of the emergence in him of self-consciousness. Thereafter it is modified and even radically changed by the results of self-conscious choices. In fact, failure to evidence such modification or change when confronted with certain elements of experience may be made a rule-of-thumb criterion of stupidity or of stubborn wishful-thinking.

The suggestion that an individual's world-view is largely brought to him through the community into which he is born and in which he is nurtured like a fish in water, implies that somehow recognizable patterns of thinking are carried to men on a sub-conscious level. This is to say that in greater or less degree the mind of the community and the individual in it coincide. The community is absolutely necessary to man. It is the bearer of his cumulative tradition. Potential man cannot become true man in isolation. But granted the fact of change, neither can he continue to be man in a community that suppresses individual peculiarities entirely.

Every change must originate with some individual who, by virtue of his originality, must be in imperfect sympathy with the mass of his contemporaries.<sup>6</sup>

But some sympathy there must be if the change is to be tried, accepted, and preserved. This is to say that man cannot be man without the possibility of self-conscious, individual choices, *and* a community to preserve the consequences or values of such choices. On the one hand, he must be looked upon as a creature with unlimited possibilities, and, to paraphrase Shakespeare, "Time must not wither nor custom stale his infinite variety." But on the other hand, the unique thoughts or activities which result from his choices must be closely enough related to those already existing to preserve the community.

The tension in man between these two is reflected in the long and sometimes bloody discussion of the alternatives: word and spirit, Law and Gospel, predestination and free-will, traditionalism and originality, priest and prophet, Catholic and Protestant, community and individuality, continuity and

change, routine and understanding, fundamentalism and modernism, totalitarianism and democracy — and, finally, the great Christian paradox of Philippians 2:12-13: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Community and individuality — continuity and change — these are the warp and woof of man's life, and the grand question is: how can he live in community enough to be truly man, without permitting the community to overwhelm him as individual? Or as Lincoln put the specific question — must a government always be too strong for the liberties of the people, or too weak to endure? Hence a minimal definition of what is good for man might be: to maintain community enough to produce men who are free enough from the community to have the possibility of self-conscious individual choices. Man cannot live even in a community of "saints" that emphasizes one to the practical exclusion of the other — as witness the history of the Puritan and the Quaker in early America.

What has been said about community and individuality suggests that human freedom — whatever else it may be — is not just freedom *from* the community. So far as world-view is concerned, the hermit is not necessarily more free than his metropolitan contemporary. Now I want to suggest that human freedom may be seen as a kind of insight into the nature of the necessity inherent in the community.

It is a truism to say that man in the universe is distinguished by possessing the possibility of self-conscious understanding of himself. Hence a man is truly man only in so far as he is a self-conscious and understanding creature. The whole creation seems to have labored to bring forth such creatures. And one goal of Christians has always been someday, somehow, completely to understand themselves, as now they believe, in faith, that they are understood by God (I Cor. 13:12). Herein the basis of their intellectual quest has coincided with an article of their faith.

Man has preserved the practical results of his self-conscious understanding — ways of doing things, tools, — in institutions. An institution is a usage, originally founded on understanding, which has become axiomatic and indispensable by habituation and general acceptance — according to Veblen. Institutions are super-individual and, so far as any one individual is concerned, practically immortal. When as a child I picked up my food with my fingers, having learned the slick phrase, "Fingers were made before forks," my parents would rightly rejoin, "Yours were not." In the terminology used above, institutions provide for the individual ready-made answers to the "what," "when," "where" questions. Along with them is developed a whole ideology providing ready-made answers to the "why" questions. Together we may call an institution and its explanatory ideology a structure-of-routine.



Therefore, we may say that the community we have been talking about is made up of a vast and very intricate and interlocking system of structures-of-routine, into which the individual is born and in which he is nurtured. This means that if the community were completely stabilized the individual need never rise to a self-conscious understanding of himself at all, and hence need never be peculiarly human. Here the individual and the community would completely coincide. As it is, a human community is usually stable enough so that the majority of individuals do not and need not become self-consciously understanding except in a very few areas.

Understanding, then, means first, becoming aware of the nature of the structures-of-routine that form one. But one has occasion to become aware of them in understanding fashion only when they cease satisfactorily to provide answers to the "what," "when," "where" and "why" questions. For this reason the achievement of understanding is always a painful process. This, for example, is why students always suffer when they are being educated — and by and large, the more they suffer the more they are learning — or consciously refusing to learn. Deliver me, therefore, from a school where everybody is happy and serene.

Now then, insofar as history is concerned with the origins and development of institutions and ideologies, and with the presuppositions upon which they are founded, it contributes directly to self-conscious understanding — to knowing oneself.

Until an individual understands the structures-of-routine that govern his conduct and thinking, he is as much a slave to them as any insect is to its instincts. As Theodore Parker once said, "One is about as bound by his past as he is ignorant of his history." But once one understands the origin and nature of these structures-of-routine he is free in his relationship to them — and only then can he, and indeed *must* he, choose whether or not to retain them. This necessity to choose makes such understanding an awe-full experience and I suppose is the basis for a conception of "terrible freedom."

Understanding, then, is equivalent to freedom — even where it is understanding of the determinative nature of an inclosing structure-of-routine. For once such a determinism is recognized as such, and consented to, a man becomes free in his relationship to it. It was a free man who prayed:

Lord, help me to know what I cannot do anything about,  
And to know what I can do something about,  
And to distinguish the one from the other.

And, I take it that Margaret Fuller was expressing this feeling of freedom when she exclaimed, "I accept the universe!" and that Carlyle was not disagreeing with her but only chiding her for the tardiness of this insight when he commented, "Gad, she'd better!" Hence an individual becomes



progressively free as he realizes the presence of, and gains insight into the nature of, even the determinative cultural and social structures-of-routine in which he has been born and nurtured.

Here it must be emphasized that good as well as evil is preserved in the structures-of-routine. Hence understanding and freedom to choose, by no means implies that one must choose to reject the routine, as some "liberals" seem to suppose. Indeed the person who cannot accept any of the traditional religious words or forms of his culture exhibits a lack of understanding and is as much bound by tradition as the person who cannot or will not accept any but traditional forms. The man of understanding — whom I would call the true liberal — precisely because he has understanding, is free: he can take them or leave them.

Finally, I suppose that I equate understanding (as self-conscious awareness of the institutions, ideologies, and presuppositions of the community in which one was nurtured) with explicit faith, which is the hall-mark of free religion. Hence *my* holy, catholic church, or community of "saints," is made up of all those, "triumphant and militant," wherever found, who have struggled for explicit faith. And my hell is populated with all those, "triumphant and militant" wherever found, who have lulled men to sleep on the threshold of true manhood with the siren song of the ultimate adequacy of implicit faith — whether transmitted through a holy church, a holy sacrament, or magical mumbo-jumbo.

---

## NOTES

1. The ideological substance of this article was, in part, contained in my article "The Task of the Church Historian," *The Chronicle*, XII (July, 1949), 127-143, and in an article on "The Place of Church History in the Curriculum of the Theological School" which was mimeographed for discussion at the Senexet Conference on Standards in January, 1956, and somewhat widely circulated.

2. *Theory and Practice in Historical Study* . . . (New York: Social Science Research Council, [1946]), p. 135.

3. Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), pp. 4-5.

4. John Herman Randall, Jr., and George Haines, IV, "Controlling Assumptions in the Practice of American Historians," *Theory and Practice in Historical Study* . . . (New York: Social Science Research Council, [1946]), pp. 20-21.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

6. Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2d ed.; London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1881), I, 6.

## AN ADDRESS TO UNITARIANS\*

BY SIDNEY E. MEAD, PH.D.

Unitarianism has a long, continuous, and sometimes noble history — which may be suggested by mentioning Renaissance humanism (to go no further back), the humanism of the Reformation period (that of Erasmus rather than that of Calvin, of course), the Enlightenment which flowered during the eighteenth century, the Romanticism of the nineteenth century (Transcendentalism in America), and the idea and spirit of modern science.

The common element in this tradition is the emphasis on man — his initiative and responsibility in the determination of his destiny — his “destiny” usually being conceived as fulfillment somehow *in* history.

This general view naturally inclines to a rejection of the Trinitarian formula — and such rejection appeared in the open as soon as there was the least bit of freedom for it to do so — but not without pain, as witness the burning of Servetus in Calvin’s Geneva on October 27, 1553. However, this should not conceal the fact that at least in America, the primary issue between this tradition and Christian orthodoxy has not been the doctrine of God but the doctrine of man.

It has been said that all Christendom divides itself into two great groups — those who have seen religion as the intrusion of the transcendental God’s word into Man’s history, and those who have seen it as the expression of, the working out of, that which is in man — the creature created in the image of God. To these two I would add a third group — those who have vacillated between the two in agony or confusion. The second view may be contained in either a theistic or humanistic framework (as “humanism” is now currently used). It is this view of man which has provided the basis for the belief in human freedom in religion which has characterized the whole tradition.

Unitarianism in America was in origin an indigenous movement in the afterglow of the Enlightenment. It was characterized by a rejection of orthodox Calvinism in New England on the basis of a different doctrine of man. The name “Unitarian” was thrust upon it by orthodox leaders — who wanted to identify the New England Congregational “liberals” (who were at most Arians) with the more radical (Socinian) and hence more offensive English Unitarians of the time. To my mind the name “Unitarian,” by suggesting

---

\* First written in 1950 for presentation to the Trustees of The Meadville Theological School, this paper was revised in April 1957 and appears here in the revised form.

that the doctrine of the Trinity was the chief issue, has sometimes been an unfortunate source of confusion, and a handicap to the denomination.

As a movement of rejection this early Unitarianism accentuated the negative. As Theodore Parker said in his *Discourse of Religion* in 1842:

Contending, as it must, with the predominant sects, then even more arrogant and imperious than now — perhaps not knowing so well the ground they stood on — its work, like most reformations, was at first critical and negative. It was a Statement of Reasons for not believing certain doctrines, very justly deemed not scriptural.

It should be noted that these early Unitarians accepted the same basis for final religious authority as did the orthodox, namely, the Bible. As George E. Ellis put it in his *A Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy*, the only "real issue" between orthodox and Unitarian was, "What are the doctrines of the Gospels as taught in the Bible?" This is made explicit in William Ellery Channing's famous Baltimore Sermon of May 5, 1819.

Unitarianism in America stepped out on a positive platform, and at the same time made its first radical break with orthodoxy by rejecting Biblical authoritarianism, with the emergence of Transcendentalism — the new idealistic philosophy of Germany mediated to American largely through the works of Kant, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe and Carlyle.

As early Unitarianism was a child of the Enlightenment, so Transcendentalism was a child of Romanticism. The Romantic movement represented a revolt against the Enlightenment as it ran into the deadend negations of David Hume. So Transcendentalism in America staged its revolt against what Ralph Waldo Emerson was to call the "corpse cold" and "pale negations of Boston Unitarianism."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a son of generations of Congregational and Unitarian ministers in Massachusetts, came out openly as Transcendentalism's Seer and Prophet in his *Divinity School Address* of July 15, 1838. But Emerson was the most gentle of prophets — he has been described as the iconoclast who did not smash the old idols, but took them from their niches quietly and carefully and packed them away in cotton, meanwhile giving to the whole procedure the benign benediction of his enigmatic smile. Nothing is more amusing, and yet at the same time more pathetic, than the fumbling discussion by the members of the Boston Unitarian Association of the question, "Is Emerson a Christian?" For while they might — and did — damn his "latest form of infidelity" with a right good will, they could not avoid admitting that in spirit he was more "Christian" than they were, and no doubt would precede them into heaven.

If Emerson was Transcendentalism's gentle Seer, Theodore Parker was its prophet. And Parker was "another sort of man." Where Emerson used

anesthetics and a scalpel, Parker used an ax. Let O. B. Frothingham compare and contrast the two:

Emerson was a man of colder temperament, thinner of blood, more spare in frame; of finer intellectual fibre, of more commanding intellectual supremacy; not a combatant on any field; a sweet, gracious, shadowy personality; calm, lucid, imperturbable; pursuing knowledge along the spiritual path of pure thought, although he was also a student of books; a regenerator of mind rather than a reformer of customs; a prophet distinguished for penetration rather than for will. His ideas were substantially the same as Parker's, but he did not arrive at them in the same way, or hold them in the same spirit, or apply them with the same directness. He carried them out further, not being hindered, as his contemporary was, by the immediate necessities of the hour. In short, he was another sort of man entirely. Both were transcendentalists, but Parker shaped his philosophy to the working exigencies of his generation, while Emerson let his stream freely in the air.

Parker, given courage by Emerson's *Divinity School Address*, came out forthrightly on the new positive platform, and made his radical break with Unitarian orthodoxy clear by his rejection of Biblical authoritarianism, in his sermon preached at the ordination of Charles C. Shackford on May 19, 1841 — *The Transient and Permanent in Christianity*. From that time forth he was the opponent of all orthodoxy — Unitarian as well as Congregational. But the orthodox, having long predicted that Unitarianism would lead to "infidelity," got a certain satisfaction out of this, while to the Boston Unitarians he was a great misery inside, for the creedless liberals could neither digest nor regurgitate him.

Both of these men had a strong, and in Parker an increasingly bitter, aversion to what Emerson dubbed "the corpse-cold Unitarianism of Harvard College and Brattle Street." Emerson added that had Martin Luther foreseen the "pale negations of Boston Unitarianism" as a result of his Reformation, he would sooner have cut off his right hand than write "Theses against the Pope." And Parker scored his erstwhile Unitarian brethren for their lack of "the deep, internal feeling of piety" — a lack of "that most joyous of all delights." "Most powerfully preaching to the understanding, the conscience, and the will," he added, their "cry was ever 'duty, duty! work, work!'" but they "failed to address with equal power the soul, and did not also shout, 'joy, joy! delight, delight!'" Hence, while

their vessels were full of water; it was all laboriously pumped up from deep wells; it did not gush out, leaping from the great spring, that is indeed on the surface of the sloping ground, feeding the little streams that run among the hills, and both quenching the wild asses' thirst, and watering also the meadows newly mown, but which yet comes from the rock of ages, and is pressed out by the cloud-compelling mountains that rest thereon — yes, by the gravitation of the earth itself.

And although these men shared a profound contempt for orthodoxy — Emerson suggested that Calvinism might spring from a "disease in the liver"

and Parker used even stronger language — yet they also shared a somewhat nostalgic and genuine appreciation for the “piety” of the Calvinism of old New England. Emerson said that in his youth it still hung like a benediction over the country holding each man down to his place with the weight to the Universe, and Parker spoke almost pathetically of “a certain direct, though perverted, action of the simple religious element in the Trinitarians.” This reflects what both men desired and what both thought their Transcendentalism might give to Unitarianism — a warm and positive piety to complement its strong rationality and morality. To this we shall return in another context.

But first I want to emphasize that Parker especially, because he ran afoul of a Unitarian orthodoxy which tried to suppress him, fought, and in the long run won, the battle for free inquiry in religion. The party that opposed him, he claimed, said “as the Unitarian fathers never said: There must be limits to free inquiry; we must not look into the grounds of religious belief, lest they be found no grounds.” Positively, he asserted that “free inquiry should never stop but with a conviction of truth.” Since Parker, although it took some time for this really to become evident, a structured and monolithic Unitarian orthodoxy has been impossible.

So with all the inadequacies of its idealistic philosophy and intuitive method, and with all its dreamy “Brook Farm” fringe, the Transcendentalist movement did build into American Unitarianism the principle of “free inquiry” in religion, at a time when the main current of American Protestantism was running the other way.

This is important, for the maintenance of this position in Unitarianism kept it open for the reception of a third element — modern scientific empiricism. But the real significance of this we can see better when we place Unitarianism against the background of the larger context suggested by an interpretation of what happened in American Protestantism during the Revolutionary Epoch (1776-1819).

During the eighteenth century the two live movements in Protestant Christianity which nourished the souls and imaginations of those unable longer to subsist on the well-picked bones of Protestant scholasticism were Pietism and Deism.

Pietism or “Methodism,” gaining its greatest strength among the lower class and uncultured people, was the expression of a revolt against the dry formalism and doctrinalism of the churches in the name of a warm religious experience in the heart. Doctrinally it remained nominally orthodox, but to say the least it did not emphasize formal theological structure, and especially in America in the form of revivalism, tended to wash out traditional standards of doctrine and polity, and in the long run to undermine the intellectual quest itself.



Deism, the religious aspect of the Anglo-American Enlightenment among the intellectual and cultured class, was in part the attempt to reconcile the Christian doctrinal tradition with the new knowledge of the Enlightenment. Hence it always contained within itself the possibility of concluding that the attempt was hopeless. When it did it stepped out boldly on a platform of "natural religion." But insofar as it remained "conservative" in this respect, it effected under the name of "natural Christianity" a synthesis of "Reason," as understood in the eighteenth century, with "Revelation" — a harmonization, that is, of the concepts of man's autonomy and God's initiative. Deism appears to have been a satisfactory position for a large number of the intellectuals, for example Benjamin Franklin; and it was certainly very fruitful in practical results.

In America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and down to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 the pressing issue for the churches was religious freedom. The problem at the time was primarily practical and in practice the Pietists and Deists united against Protestant orthodoxy which by and large clung to the traditional Christian view of the State-Church relationship.

But the startling events of the French Revolution, widely interpreted in American religious circles as indicating an attempt of a French International to overthrow all religion and government, turned the great bulk of Protestantism to a rejection of the whole ethos of the Enlightenment. When this happened the Pietists lined up with traditional orthodoxy in rejecting the whole eighteenth century attempt to effect a synthesis of "Reason" and "Revelation." This was a genuine "flight from Reason," and it meant that American Protestantism henceforth for more than a century, by and large turned its back on the basic ideas and spirit of modern civilization which were rooted in the Enlightenment.

Now, the original American Unitarian rejection of New England Calvinistic orthodoxy was, in the name of Reason, *a rejection of this Protestant rejection of the ethos of the Enlightenment*. It was, as Parker said, "an attempt to apply good sense to theology, to reconcile knowledge with belief, reason with revelation, (and) to humanize the Church." Thus seen the movement appears audacious and even heroic — something that Parker never tired of reiterating. To defend "good sense" in theology in Protestant circles in America during the first quarter of the nineteenth century required courage — and Unitarianism has never been fully forgiven for doing so.

What is suggested here is that during the period when the overwhelming bulk of American Protestantism turned "right" in a flight from Reason, Unitarianism turned "left" in defense of Reason. Channing in his Baltimore Sermon of 1819 hoisted its colors for all to see. And just as many orthodox Protestants turned against the Enlightenment in a truculent and recalcitrant



mood, so Unitarians in their counter-revolt were not entirely immune to a similar spirit.

But positively their revolt meant that Unitarianism remained in close touch with the spirit of modern civilization, always attuned to the changing currents of its ideas and moods. And as during the nineteenth century those currents were dominated first by idealistic Romanticism, and then increasingly by scientific empiricism, Unitarians, not without inner struggle and turmoil, were deeply affected. Thus were woven into the structure of American Unitarianism the three great strands — rationalistic Biblical authoritarianism (Channing Unitarianism), idealistic Romanticism (The Transcendentalism stemming from Emerson and Parker), and naturalistic, scientific empiricism. These strands have been related to traditional Christian orthodoxy, and hence interested in being called "Christian" in that order. The inner struggles of American Unitarianism may be seen as the clash between representatives of these three traditions.

One basic principle, to which all appeal, is freedom of inquiry and opinion in religion. At least I would interpret so the 1882 amendment to the constitution of the Unitarian National Conference which stated that,

while the constitution embodied the views of a majority of Unitarians, it was distinctly understood that there was no authoritative test of Unitarianism, and that none would be excluded from its fellowship "who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy *with our purposes and practical aims.*"

I do not think that one of these strands could ever come to complete dominance without destroying institutionalized Unitarianism itself, and with it its testimony that Freedom of inquiry and opinion is possible in an organized religious group. You cannot, for example, have such freedom and at the same time the kind of unity achieved in the confessionally based churches — and for Unitarians to long for it is to long for the fleshpots of Egypt while wandering in a wilderness. Unitarians must be reconciled to living under tension! Therefore the greatest mistake an individual or a party within Unitarianism can make is to fight to annihilate an opponent in the denomination. It follows that Unitarians do not want their theological schools to serve any one party or faction in the denomination.

Theodore Parker almost always referred to early Unitarianism as "the movement party in theology" and he was in turn saddened and then angered by indications that it would cease to move. Certainly, as we look back on the general situation suggested above, it appears that Unitarianism was in a splendid position to lead a new reformation — a revolt against a Protestantism turning back to tradition with all the fervor brought to it by Pietism. But a reformation of great stature and proportion requires a positive position — and Parker thought he had found it within Unitarianism itself. As early as his *Discourse of Religion* he pleaded that

Now the time has come for Unitarianism — representing the movement party in theological affairs — to do something; develop the truth it has borne, latent and unconscious, in its bosom.

And, he added,

it is plain what the occasion demands. Good sense must be applied to theology; religion applied to life, both to be done radically, fearlessly, with honest earnestness; assumptions must be abandoned; the facts sought for; their relation and their law determined, and thus truth got at.

But he learned to regret that

This is just the thing that is not done; which Unitarianism is not doing. The Trojan horse of sectarian organization is brought into the citadel with the usual effect upon that citadel. The "Unitarian sect" is divided. There is an "Old School" and a "New School" . . . and a chasm between them, not wide . . . but very deep.

And finally is his "Experience as a Minister" he concluded with exasperation that Unitarianism had become

a sect, hide-bound, bridled with its creed, harnessed to an old, lumbering, and crazy chariot, urged with sharp goads by near-sighted drivers, along the dusty and broken pavement of tradition, noisy and shouting, but going nowhere.

Why didn't Unitarianism sweep the nation as it early promised to do — as witness the often quoted prophecy of Thomas Jefferson; that every intelligent young man then living would die a Unitarian?

There is, of course, no complete and ultimate answer to such a question, except to say with Lincoln that there is that stubborn something in human history that limits all man's purposing, and to which Emerson referred, in what has all too often been considered a merely casual remark, by saying that the Universe is a little rough on man at times. Nevertheless it is instructive to note at least two factors which throw some light on the fact that Unitarianism was circumscribed by Evangelical orthodoxy under such leaders as Lyman Beecher. And both are of interest to me because they give to the story of early Unitarianism in America some of the character of a Greek tragedy. A pagan might say that if ever the derisive gods lured a group of men on to expectations that the situation and their own characters made impossible of fulfillment, they so played with the early Boston Unitarians.

The first factor was the nature of their revolt and the nature of the defense of it that they developed in controversy with the orthodox. Unitarianism appeared in the Boston area only after New England Congregationalism had been contending with "Infidelity" for the soul of America for a generation. "Infidelity," was defined as denial that the Bible alone contained God's saving revelation to man. Early Unitarian leaders of course fervently believed that the Bible was such a revelation, as witness Channing. But their orthodox opponents argued that their emphasis on the use of

Reason in its interpretation would inevitably lead them into "Infidelity." Thus the Unitarian leaders were trapped into twenty years' reiteration that such was not the case. This assertion they ploughed into their record.

And so they were on the spot when in 1838 Transcendentalism erupted in their midst with Emerson's declaration that the embryo ministers before him should "go alone"; should become "new born bard(s) of the Holy Ghost" casting behind them "all conformity" in order to "acquaint men at first hand with Deity." Granted their record it is hard to see how they could have done anything but reject what Professor Andrews Norton of Harvard soon dubbed "the latest form of infidelity." The consternation of the conservative Unitarians is indicated by the fact that Norton republished

in Cambridge, with his open endorsement, articles from *The Princeton Review*, from the very stronghold of orthodoxy, in which three Calvinist theologians castigated Emerson and the Transcendentalists.

And yet this rejection of Transcendentalism meant the rejection of the positive affirmations that Unitarians themselves had prepared the way for. In larger context it meant that Unitarianism lost the opportunity then provided to ride the incoming wave of Romanticism.

Horace Bushnell of Hartford, Connecticut managed to domesticate Romanticism sufficiently for orthodox use, and became the father of nineteenth century liberalism in the large orthodox denominations. Hence, by the time Unitarians, pressed by the Free Religious Association, finally got around to accepting Parker's Transcendentalism it was barely distinguishable from wide areas of orthodoxy, and anyway had ceased to be the basic issue — which by then was scientific empiricism. Transcendentalism as a popular religious movement in America was drained off into the "cults." Charles Braden (*These Also Believe*) is right in suggesting that Emerson is "the real spiritual father of New Thought" — and New Thought has spawned Christian science, Unity Truth, Psychiana, Norman Vincent Peal-ism, and a host of related "isms" in our land.

The second factor I have in mind is a much more delicate matter since it has to do with the character of the early Unitarian leaders. Hence, I refer to it only obliquely and depend largely upon quotations from Parker and Emerson for direct statements.

The Unitarian "sect," said Parker in his sermon on *Spiritual Conditions* — and with a delicacy of touch unusual for him — "has done great service" and is "I think, still doing something to enlighten and liberalize the land." But, he continued,

This sect has always been remarkable for a certain gentlemanly reserve about all that pertained to the inward part of religion; other faults it might have, but it did not incur the reproach of excessive enthusiasm.

And Emerson suggests in rather sly fashion that some of the enthusiasm it did engender might be drained off into pleasant sociability. Speaking of Channing's efforts to establish a literary society, Emerson says that Channing went to the home of Dr. John Collins Warren where he thought the matter was to be discussed. There

he found a well-chosen assembly of gentlemen variously distinguished; there was mutual greeting and introduction, and they were chatting agreeably on indifferent matters and drawing gently toward their great expectation, when a side-door opened, the whole company streamed in to an oyster supper, crowned by excellent wines; and so ended the first attempt to establish aesthetic society in Boston.

Parker and Emerson here both hinted at something in the cultured character of the early Unitarians that militated against their ever becoming the leaders of a genuinely popular or grass roots religious movement. This, thought Parker, was tragic, and while in the sermon quoted above he praised the "Unitarian sect" because

it set itself to promote the cultivation of reason, and apply that to religion; to cultivate morality and apply it to life; and to demand the most entire personal freedom for all men in all matters pertaining to religion,

yet, he added sadly, "the Unitarians, it seems to me, did neglect the culture of piety." And this he thought meant that

of course their morality, while it lasted, would be unsatisfactory, and in time would wither and dry up because it had no deepness of earth to grow out of.

And in a final purple outburst he seems to have given them and their "inductive mode of religious culture" up in despair:

Alas! after many a venturesome and profitable cruise, while in sight of port, the winds all fair, the little Unitarian bark, o'ermastered by its doubts and fears, reverses its course, and sails into dark, stormy seas, where no such craft can live. Some of the fragments of the wreck will be borne by oceanic currents where they will be used by the party of progress to help to build more seaworthy ships; whilst others, when water-logged, will be picked up by the great orthodox fleet, to be kiln-dried in a revival, and then serve as moist, poor fuel for its culinary fires. It is a dismal fault in a religious party, this lack of piety, and dismally have the Unitarians answered it; yet let their great merits and services be not forgot.

Unitarianism, I think, had its second great opportunity to lead an extensive grass-roots movement in America during the two decades following the Civil War when a widespread "revolt against the Christian churches was in progress." In developing this theme I must depend almost entirely upon Stow Persons' study of the Free Religious Association called *Free Religion, An American Faith*, published in 1947 — a book that ought to be compulsory reading for every Unitarian. Unitarian leaders of the time were probably right in supposing that organized Christianity as they knew it "was neither free nor rational" and that many men "would continue to repudiate all

religious doctrines until religion could justify herself before the bar of science." Further, they "possessed a personnel capable of furnishing national leadership for religious radicalism should . . . they wish to take the initiative." Further, such initiative and leadership was being asked for by the many Free Religious Clubs spontaneously springing up in many cities.

Hence the great question facing Unitarianism (including now its offspring, the Free Religious Association, organized in 1867 as "sort of a mutual protective society for those who would not submit to the yoke of Christ as prescribed by the National Unitarian Conference") was "whether to attempt to lead this revolt in accordance with its own conception of rational and non-sectarian theism."

But the energies of the Conference were apparently dissipated in the attempt to maintain a Unitarian orthodoxy, while the Free Religious Association foundered in the hopeless attempt to preserve the complete individual freedom of every member. The Conference amendment of 1882 was too little and too late to meet the situation. Unitarianism lost its second great opportunity in America to become a mighty movement. No doubt, reminiscent of Parker, fragments of this wreck were picked up by the "great orthodox fleet" now cruising under the command of such giants as Dwight L. Moody — and as suggested above, many other fragments were picked up by the growing fleet of the cults.

I believe that Unitarianism at the present time is being offered a third great opportunity and responsibility. Deep and powerful spiritual currents are flowing through the world today, evidenced by profound religious ferment and movements of many kinds. There is a widespread search for spiritual roots, and hence, a re-examination and re-evaluation of our common Hebrew-Greek-Roman-Christian tradition to see if we can find and tap again the ancient sources of religious power.

In such a time and mood there is always the great danger of a flight from reason — which in our world would mean a flight from freedom — a flight which well might become a stampede and a turning back to the old idols of authoritarianism. For powerful interests, now reinforced and encouraged by widespread failure of nerve, would have us believe that the ancient springs of spiritual power are synonymous with the ancient forms.

Against this tendency Unitarians with their tradition must stand to the death, for if it comes to prevail they die anyway. They must make their protest in the name of reason and freedom. There are many indications that they will do this — for example the flourishing of Fellowships and Churches all over the land.

But protest alone is not enough forever to feed the souls of men. This is what Emerson and Parker tried to tell their contemporaries. And both I think demonstrated, each in his own way, that positive religious power can



sprout in the soil of non-confessional freedom. To satisfy the present need the protest must have the deep roots in the soul of man that Parker thought he had found. He called it "piety." And this means the passage through deep darkness, and perhaps through agony. And it means great risks. Unitarians today if they are to fulfill their destiny, must pass through side doors that lead to something more than oyster suppers "crowned by excellent wines." The end, I think, is that suggested by Alfred North Whitehead:

That religion will conquer which can render clear to popular understanding some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact.

Finally, then, as this sentence suggests, Unitarians seem to me to be called upon to require that their religion do full justice to the full nature of man. If we do this we need have no real fear for the future. For as Parker put it:

Should the persons who sit in these churches rise to the stature of men, they must carry away the roof and steeple, for man is greater than the churches he allows to tyrannize over him.

Here we must stand.

## MARION FRANKLIN HAM\*

BY HENRY WILDER FOOTE, S. T. D., D. D.

Minister Emeritus of the First Church in Belmont

Marion Franklin Ham, whom we hold in loving remembrance today because his hymns have been a notable contribution to one of the most important of the religious arts, was born at Harveysburg, Ohio, on February 18, 1867, and died at Arlington, Massachusetts on July 23, 1956. He was educated in the public schools at Harveysburg until, as a youth, he moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, seeking better opportunities for employment than his native town could offer. There he became a newspaper reporter and then a bank clerk. About 1888 he began to write verse, usually lyrical descriptions of some aspect of nature, which found publication in newspapers and magazines. One of his poems, "Bob White," published in *The Southern Magazine* in 1893, had a great popular appeal and was widely reprinted. His collected poems were published in 1896 under the title *The Golden Shuttle*, and ran to a fourth edition in 1910. He also wrote a series of delightfully humorous dialect stories depicting life in the "Old South" which he often presented in readings from the public platform but which have never been printed.

A little earlier a small group of religious liberals had organized a Unitarian church in Chattanooga, and his eager mind was attracted to this liberal interpretation of Christianity, hitherto unknown to him. When the pulpit of the church was vacated Mr. Ham was invited to serve as a lay reader at its meetings; then he began to write sermons, so successfully that in 1898 the church ordained him as its third minister. This was an unusual procedure because his formal education had ended on the high-school level of that period, and he lacked the professional training which a minister was expected to acquire in college and theological school. But through his intellectual ability and studious habits this self-educated man became a competent and beloved minister, whose wisdom came from above instead of echoing what he had heard from a remote professional chair. He never resorted to the devices of the "popular preacher" or sought fame as a pulpit orator; his sermons were usually quiet meditations with passages of deep spiritual insight, or gentle admonitions to adhere to the higher standards of life, which brought comfort and illumination to appreciative hearers. From Chattanooga he went to serve the church in Dallas, Texas, then to Reading, Mass.,

---

\* A paper read at the meeting of The Religious Arts Guild, May 23, 1957, Boston, Massachusetts.

and finally to Waverley, Mass., and after his retirement served at Gardner, Mass. as interim minister for two years.

Were this the whole story we should not be holding this commemoration of him here today, though he would still be remembered with affection by those whom he had served as a wise and kindly minister. It was only in the later half of his life that he entered upon the activity which we commemorate today.

In 1911 the preparation of *The New Hymn and Tune Book* had begun and it was suggested to Dr. Ham that he might try his hand at writing one or more hymns for possible inclusion in that collection. It so happened that in September of that year his eyesight was so seriously affected that he feared he might become blind, and this anxiety found expression in his first hymn,

Touch Thou mine eyes, — the sombre shadows falling  
Shut from my sight the kindly light of day !  
Out of the depths my soul to thee is calling,  
Touch thou mine eyes, I cannot see the way !

Frail is the flesh that waits for thine appearing,  
And blind the dust that turns to thee for sight,  
Thy power must quicken earthly sight and hearing,  
Thy word impart the Spirit's life and light.

Life of the life that hour by hour is dying,  
In death, I live, by thy sustaining grace !  
Father, who hearest all thy children's crying,  
Touch thou mine eyes, that I may see thy face !

This hymn is the utterance of an intense personal emotion, akin to that experienced by many individuals in painful circumstances, though suitable for congregational use only on rare occasions, but it is flawless in form and profound in feeling.

His next hymn,

O Lord of life, thy kingdom is at hand !  
Blest reign of love and liberty and light;

was written in May, 1912, first sung at the Anniversary Service of the American Unitarian Association a year later, and has since been included in the hymnals of at least five Protestant denominations. It was an expression of the optimism of the period previous to World War I, but it sings no less of our present-day striving to attain a warless world.

In November, 1912 he wrote his communion hymn, addressed to Jesus "as to a friend that we have known." In four short stanzas of lovely verse, free from traditional theological implications, it portrays the episode of the Last Supper as understood by a modern liberal.

O thou whose gracious presence shone  
A light to bless thy fellow-men,  
To thee we fondly turn again,  
As to a friend that we have known.

And lo! again we seem to hear  
Thy blessing on the loaf and cup;  
The presence that was lifted up  
Again to loving hearts brought near.

In the same month he wrote his fourth hymn.

I hear thy voice, within the silence speaking.

This again is a hymn of personal devotion, reminiscent of Eliza Scudder's

Thou Life within my life, than self more near,

and quite equal to that hymn in the perfection of its verse.

Dr. John Haynes Holmes, in his tribute to Dr. Ham, has pointed out that two seemingly contrasting but in truth complementary views of religion have found expression in our Unitarian hymnody through the last century and a half. They are the rationalist's prophetic call to active service and the mystic's less dominant but none-the-less characteristic meditation on the soul's search for God. In the last 50 years Dr. Holmes and Dr. Ham have themselves been our two finest singers in these two keys. For Dr. Holmes

The voice of God is calling  
It summons unto men,

whereas Dr. Ham hears the "voice within the silence speaking — its whispered message." Yet in our hymnody they unite

As tranquil streams that meet and merge  
And flow as one to seek the sea.

These first four hymns by Dr. Ham were included in *The New Hymn and Tune Book* (1914) and in its successor, *Hymns of the Spirit* (1937).

Having thus turned from secular verse to songs of the spirit a steady succession of hymns flowed from his pen for the rest of Dr. Ham's life. Five more were included in *Hymns of the Spirit*, among them songs for Palm Sunday and Christmas. I venture to disclose the origin of one of the finest of these,

Heir of all the waiting ages, Hope of ages yet to be,  
as an illustration of Dr. Ham's spirit and method. The Commission which was preparing *Hymns of the Spirit* wished to include the beautiful medieval tune known as Picardy but had found no words suited for use in our churches. About Christmas-tide in 1936 I took the music to Dr. Ham, went through it with him, and asked him to try his hand at writing appropriate words to match its mood and metre. A few days later he sent me a draft of the hymn, inviting criticism of it. I took it back to him, asking that several lines be re-written. Soon I received a second draft, and again I went over it with him suggesting still other changes. He was not only willing, he was

eager to make any possible improvements, and it was the third and by far the best version of the hymn which was gladly accepted for inclusion in the book.

I have reported this episode because it illustrates how his character moulded his verse. He never wrote a hymn carelessly or in haste; he always sought for the simplest words to convey the truth he saw, — or more often felt, — and then carefully wrought them into singing lines of lyric beauty. He never was guilty of false rhymes or needless verbiage or misplaced accents. Yet, in contrast to many hymn-writers who resent any alterations in their verses, he was always open-minded in considering suggested changes, and frequently accepted them. In both these respects he resembled Dr. Frederick Lucian Hosmer, and that is the explanation of the lyrical perfection of his hymns.

I have no time to speak of his other hymns included in *Hymns of the Spirit*, which you can find for yourselves, nor of those written in later years and published in his little volume, *Songs at Sunset*, in 1952. Some of them will find their way into future hymn books, — indeed one for America,

O my country, land of promise,  
had prompt and widespread publication in church periodicals.

His hymn-writing continued for 45 years, almost exactly half his lifetime, and brought him widespread recognition by hymn lovers. In 1942 Meadville Theological School gave him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, and four years ago this Religious Arts Guild gave him its citation for his contribution to one of the most universal religious arts, that of hymody.

Only a year before his death he wrote a poem, "In a Rose Garden," to which Dr. Holmes has referred in his tribute. And in his last illness, when he lay helpless in bed, only a few weeks before the end, he wrote his last verses, the perfect expression of the way he faced life and was facing death.

My Heavenly Father, you have been with me  
Since I first saw the light of life at birth;  
Shaping with patient love my destiny,  
Teaching me how to live my life on earth,

In joy or sorrow, stormy days or fair,  
In pain or pleasure still my faithful friend;  
Easing the burdens that I could not bear,  
Abiding with me to the journey's end.

And now, as twilight fades into the night  
And darkness calls me to the unknown deep,  
I see your glory in the fading light  
And feel you near me as I fall asleep.



## UNITARIANA \*

BY HOLLEY M. SHEPHERD, A. B., S. T. B.

Assistant in Harvard Divinity School Library

Last winter Dean Horton opened an address to the members of the school and alumni by quoting from Mather's *Magnalia*. Since he has set the precedent and since it is so appropriate to have this particular group meeting here I would also like to make a quotation from the *Magnalia*. The one I have in mind is by Dr. Arrowsmith in his Antiweigelian Oration, "May the great and good God grant, that this college shall be so tenacious of the truth, that it will be easier to find a wolf in England and a snake in Ireland, than either a Socinian or Arminian in Cambridge!"<sup>1</sup>

I suppose that most Unitarians have an idea that Unitarianism suddenly flowered in New England and that naturally so important an event is well documented and the historical materials preserved in libraries. Unfortunately that is only partly true.

Historically speaking the materials in libraries which will inform the person interested in Unitarianism cover a wide range of literary form, at least seven languages, and approximately five centuries in time.

Although there has been no want for able and dedicated minds in the cause of Unitarianism it has only been within fairly recent times that we have had truly outstanding works of history. Probably the best known and most carefully done are those of Dr. Earl Morse Wilbur and Dr. Conrad Wright. In addition to these there are many works of a somewhat restricted nature like Wendte's work on the Preachers, etc., the various parish histories and such more recent works as *Unitarianism on the Pacific Coast* by Arnold Crompton.<sup>2</sup>

Individual treatises on special subjects and sermons directed toward a particular end abound. Series of sermons, addresses, papers, forums and lectures are readily located though the auspices are not always what one would expect.

In short there are many obvious sources of information and the person seeking them out will not be disappointed. However, the obvious in this case covers only a small fraction of the material which may yet be uncovered, or perhaps more correctly, recovered. Much of the valuable material of Unitarian history remains to be gathered together and catalogued so that it

---

\* Delivered at the Fall Seminar of the Unitarian Historical Society, November 19, 1957 held at the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

may be properly evaluated and used to clarify and fill in the total picture. These are not now readily available to the average searcher. Here at the Divinity School we frequently have people come in who are working on a doctoral dissertation or some similar work seeking Unitarian material. Their stay here usually follows the same general pattern. First they go to the card catalog and spend a considerable time. Next they come to the desk in a state of combined bewilderment and exasperation. The first question is whether or not we have any Unitarian materials hidden away in some other file. They explain that they cannot find what they want under the heading Unitarianism. We then have to explain that we hope one day it will be practical to list everything under the heading which is so familiar to all of us today, but actually what we call Unitarianism has so varied an historical background that it must be sought under a variety of headings. At the beginning of his *History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and its Antecedents* in a footnote to the introduction Dr. Earl Morse Wilbur<sup>3</sup> lists some twenty-five other terms under which material on Unitarianism is to be found. Having explained this and shown our visitor how to use our particular card catalog and where the bibliographies are located we prepare for the next question which invariably is, "Don't you have English translations of the materials in foreign languages?" The persons usually go on to explain that they were not aware of Unitarianism's extensive and diffuse history in Europe. Neither were they prepared for the volume of material bearing upon their subject in Latin.

We send people to the bibliographies to find the sources of material useful to them in their researches. Unfortunately this is really something of an academic mean trick where Unitarianism is concerned. In most bibliographies there is very little listed under that term. In the European Bibliographies it is almost all under Socinianism, Arminianism, and Anti-Trinitarianism. More often the material wanted on the earlier period will be listed under heresies, especially in the Catholic bibliographies. This should be no deterrent to using Catholic works, however. Recently at the Divinity School Dr. Williams has been using a work on Unitarianism by Stanislaus Dunin Borkowski which appears in the *75 Jahre Stella Matutina*.<sup>4</sup> Some very excellent historical work has been done by Catholic scholars and ought not to be neglected.

Bibliography and history in the case of Unitarianism begin with Christopher Sand in 1684 giving us in Latin a catalog of Anti-Trinitarian works along with his own account of the movement. The next study of this sort is by Severin Walther Sluter in 1696 again in Latin. The Sand work is in the Divinity School Library and the Sluter work, on microfilm, is also there. From this point on there is a great void until we reach 1889 when the American Unitarian Association issued a *List of religious books by Unitarian Authors*. Sporadically from that time until 1938 lists of this sort were issued

by the A. U. A., the Alliance, and other groups of individuals. This material has never been pulled together and organized. In fact there is a large amount of material in general bibliographies which ought to be gathered together in one place. Moving forward toward the present we come to the high point bibliographically speaking. In 1950 there was published in Italian in Rome *A Bibliography of the Pioneers of the Socinian — Unitarian Movement in Modern Christianity in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland* by Earl Morse Wilbur. This work culminates in a Bibliography of Unitarianism by Dr. Wilbur on file cards in the library of the Starr King School. This listing consists of seven thousand entries in seven languages. The scope and size of the collection is reason enough to rejoice but we have the good fortune to be grateful for something more. Over the years Dr. Wilbur has developed a system of bibliography and form which particularly meet the needs of those studying Unitarianism and also is in keeping with the best academic standards. It is our hope to get the large bibliography from Starr King library on microfilm and then to turn the film back into cards so that it can be used in Harvard Divinity School Library. At the present time there is no bibliography at all of American Unitarianism. There will be a bibliography with Dr. Wright's work but of necessity it will be rather specialized. What we need is an exhaustive bibliography of American Unitarian materials prepared in keeping with the style and standards already set forth and proven by Dr. Wilbur.

There have been bibliographies other than those I have mentioned. Many of the books by Unitarian authors contain bibliographic footnotes. Some contain bibliographies. In the latter category we have two recent works. There is *Unitarianism on the Pacific Coast* by Arnold Crompton,<sup>5</sup> and then we have *Freedom Moves West* by Charles H. Lyttle<sup>6</sup> which contains a very interesting Bibliographic Guide. *The Epic of Unitarianism* by David B. Parke<sup>7</sup> lists the sources of the documents used. While on recent books we certainly do not want to forget *The Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* edited by Dr. George H. Williams.<sup>8</sup> There is bibliographic material in this book arranged as such but a more extensive one will be found in this library by Dr. Williams called a *Bibliography of the Radical Reformation*.<sup>9</sup> Along with this is a very helpful book by Dr. Bainton, *Bibliography of the Continental Reformation: Materials available in English*. (Chicago 1935).

Among the interesting bibliographies which have been gathered is one listed in the John Crerar Library list of Bibliographies of Special subjects. It is a selected bibliography of the religious denominations of the United States. With a list of the most important Catholic works of the world as an appendix. This was compiled by the Rev. Joseph H. McMahon. The whole work is edited by George Franklin Bowerman and published in New York by the Cathedral Library Association in 1896.

*Handbuch Der Kirchengeschichte fur Studierende* by Gustav Kruge published at Tubingen in 1911 has a good bibliography of largely German material bearing on Unitarianism in Europe and America on pages 217-221 of volume three.

*Repertoire General de Sciences Religieuses* (Paris 1951) is a very workable and concise bibliography.

The simplest and easiest beginning for anyone is by John G. Barrow, A *Bibliography of Bibliographies in Religion* published by the author in 1955.

In searching bibliographies and catalogs it is well to remember the term *liberal* and *liberalism*. While these terms are household terms with us and do not necessarily signify Unitarian that was just the idea people had not too long ago and a good many items which we might think of as Unitarian are to be found under the head of liberalism.

Another term to be checked especially in using bibliographies where things are listed by title is Index. Many an Index has been assembled which includes material which is either Unitarian or pertains to historical situations which are important to Unitarianism. Theodor Besterman in his *Bibliography of Bibliographies* (Second Edition) (Vol. 11), (2766) lists a group of indexes of sermons printed in Great Britain, one of the most interesting being by William Hawes, "A complete collection of all the sermons that are printed, and sold for one penny, two-pence, or three-pence. To the end of July 1709. Alphabetically digested, . . . to which is added, a collection of the most useful discourses, printed for the promotion of christian piety and devotion" (a copy in the Cambridge University library contains ms. additions). There are other indexes to sermons in France, Germany, Sweden, but nothing for the United States, not even by individual denominations. There was once the rudimentary start of such an index located in this library but no one could be convinced of its value so it fell into disuse. There ought to be such a listing made for Unitarian printed sermons and discourses. This should not be construed as meaning that we do not have a good collection. Probably we have the finest there is. The sermons which we have are all listed in the general catalog under the name of the writer, and may be found in the sermon collection, tracts, or pamphlets. There really should be a finding aid for them such as a check list of the writers listed alphabetically under the heading of his particular denomination with dates of birth and death.

There is a file of sermons arranged by date and by town where the sermon was preached. This file includes all sorts of sermons dating from 1805 to 1845. It is a fine beginning toward a complete file and time should not be lost in completing the project. The problem will be one of the cost to do it and finding a person who has the interest.

Apart from the few who have made a point of really studying Unitarian history little seems to have been known of the scope of the subject until



very recent times. Dr. Wilbur's *Our Unitarian Heritage* (Boston 1925) really only set the stage for the work he was to do. We have to remember that the two volumes of Unitarian history which he produced were published only as long ago as 1945 and 1952. The first volume of Dr. Wright's *History of Unitarianism in America* was only published in 1955. This does not mean that there have been no efforts to write Unitarian history in the past or that such works are unworthy of serious attention. Various individual ministers from time to time have written their own particular versions of Unitarian history. We still have to gather in these works which were largely in pamphlet form. Some works were rather general and by title might not seem to be Unitarian. A case in point is a work entitled *The Religion of New England* (Beacon Press, Boston 1926) by Rev. Thomas Van Ness, minister of the Second Unitarian Society of Brookline, Mass. Published in 1926 this work grew out of a need for a popular account of the New England religious scene and Unitarianism in particular which he noted among the college students in his congregation and it was for them that these lectures were originally written and later published. It is in these more or less informal accounts that we run across pertinent thoughts sometimes passed by in the more intense histories. Let me quote a passage from Van Ness starting on page 20, "Have you ever thought of the fact that the word 'independent', or 'independence', was what may be called a new word in the English language in Queen Elizabeth's time? The word is not found in the English Bible. No, nor in Shakespeare's plays. You read there of 'dependence,' not of 'independence.' The word 'independency' was born, as E. E. Hale tells us, 'when the hated Brownists separated themselves from the Church of England.' It came into popular use on this continent in connection with the free and vigorous spirit which formulated the sentences of the Declaration of Independence and declared them to the world in 1776." I have checked this in the Oxford Dictionary and find it to be true. Carrying on this spirit which is so much a part of our state of being in 1930 Dr. Henry Hallam Saunderson published a book entitled *Modern Religion from Puritan Origins*.<sup>10</sup> Earlier he had given many interesting views of our religious development in his book *Charles W. Eliot: Puritan Liberal*.<sup>11</sup>

In 1890 the A. U. A. published a book called *Unitarianism, Its Origin And History*. This was a series of sixteen lectures delivered in Channing Hall, Boston. The list of lecturers reads like a catalog of famous Unitarian names or of faculty members of Harvard Divinity School. Again in 1902 the A. U. A. published *Unitarianism in America* by George Willis Cooke. There have been other histories written both in this country and in England. The picture in England can be readily procured through the materials by and about Biddle, Priestley, Lindsey and others. It has however, remained for recent times to produce the great and definitive works on Unitarian history. In England we have a recent work in the same vein as Dr. Wilbur's



by H. McLachlan entitled *Socininism in Seventeenth Century England*. This was published in 1951. Comparing this somewhat to Dr. Wilbur's work brings us around the circle to him again and I would like to quote a line or two from a review of his work written by Dr. Roland Bainton and published in *The Review of Religion* of November 1946. "The work is even more welcome because nothing of the sort previously existed in English, and the only comparable work in any language is now more than a century old."<sup>12</sup>

A particularly good short history of modern Unitarianism with references to the earlier period is written by W. G. Tarrant and called *Unitarianism* published in London in 1912. The author takes the position that a definite date of 1536 may be taken as the beginning of Unitarianism assuming that the many trials and executions for denying the Trinity are the real start of the movement.

Among the historical writings is a book edited by Dr. Louis Cornish for a commission to visit the churches in Transylvania in 1922 entitled *Transylvania in 1922*. It is a very interesting report of the aims and successes of the commission but like so many other such writings is perhaps more interesting to some of us for the many passages like the following. They were visiting at the home of a well-to-do church member. "During the desert and coffee several persons sang, and we were asked to do our part. Lawrence Redfern and Palfrey Perkins, who sing very well together, sang 'Drink to me only with thine eyes,' Palfrey Perkins taking the tenor and Lawrence Redfern the air. This was received with appreciation, but we were told candidly that it was 'much too sad.' Of course the words were not understood, but evidently the music seemed too plaintive. Lawrence Redfern then sang 'McNamara's Band,' Palfrey Perkins and Louis Cornish helping with the chorus, which was received with great applause."<sup>13</sup>

Before leaving historical material I would remind you to be sure to note the reports of the several International Congresses which are published and very readily available.

Another source of Unitarian information is contained in the many histories of individual churches. A large number of these have been called forth by special anniversaries and other occasions. However, there are quite a few which are simply the product of the great interest of the minister and not tied to any special observance. Among the interesting parish histories which we have is one commemorating the 75th anniversary of the church at Meadville, Penna., written by Dr. Wilbur. This was printed in 1902 at Meadville. There are however, three special copies. These copies have bound with the regular text, "full manuscript notes, appendices, and references to the original sources" by Dr. Wilbur. One copy went to Meadville Theological School, one to Harvard Divinity School and one to the A. U. A. Another interesting history is a short one issued of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the First Church in Salem, Mass.<sup>14</sup> I suppose one

of the best known parish histories is the multi-volume *Annals of King's Chapel*.<sup>15</sup> There is another history of that church which is highly interesting reading, *History of King's Chapel in Boston: The First Episcopal Church in New England* by Francis William Pitt Greenwood (Boston 1833).

Biographical material of course usually accompanies historical writing and for this aspect of Unitarianism there are numerous choices. Robert Wallace has provided us with three volumes of *Anti-Trinitarian Biographies*.<sup>16</sup> W. Turner has given us *Lives of Eminent Unitarians*<sup>17</sup> to which is added a notice of the Dissenting Academies which are of particular interest. William Ware edited a two volume work, *American Unitarian Biography*, published in Boston in 1850. Growing out of the Thursday Lectures in Boston is a book entitled *Pioneers of Religious Liberty In America*<sup>18</sup> and of course we should not forget Dr. Eliot's *Heralds of the Liberal Faith*.<sup>19</sup> Individual lives abound and are to be found under the name of the person concerned.

A rather neglected source of information on Unitarian developments is a recording and examination of the efforts and materials presented against the Unitarian cause. The opposition has been quite as vocal as the Unitarians themselves.

In England there was an act admitting toleration of Unitarians. However, this was not necessarily accepted by all persons and particularly not by some English Bishops and hence a work appears by one George Wilson Meadly described as "A letter to the Bishop of St. David's on some extraordinary passages in a charge, delivered to the clergy of his diocese in September, 1813 by a lay reader."<sup>20</sup> It seems the Bishop felt that toleration of Unitarians was just about the worst thing that could happen to the Church of England.

Bishop Burgess of Maine, published in 1847 a work called *Pages from the Ecclesiastical History of New England during the Century Between 1740 and 1840*. In many ways the work is as lucid and as fresh today as when it was written. Taking a portion at random we read, "A bolder and more successful spirit stood there at their side, and shrunk not from the forms of the parish and the pulpit. Theodore Parker was the minister of the Second Society in Roxbury. At the ordination of Shackford at South Boston, he was the preacher; and his theme was the Transient and the Permanent in Christianity. He feared not to reject, revile, and blaspheme whatever is supernatural in the scriptural history; regarding the Old Testament as a pile of gorgeous pictures, the New as filled with mistaken legends and opinions which time had washed away; and Jesus Christ as only such a person as others might be and yet may be, if the divinity within them be but enough revealed. The congregation listened with awe; the elder Unitarian pastors looked one another in the face; but the earth opened not, and the ordination went on" (p. 117-118).<sup>21</sup>

We should also bear in mind that there are materials which give information about the Unitarian situation by telling the story of the opposition. A William Toth has written a thesis entitled, *The Contribution of Stephen Kis of Szeged to the Trinitarian Struggle of the Hungarian Reformation*, Yale University, 1941. Two chapters were published in *Church History*. A description of the work says in part ". . . Szeged's orthodox position is related to those who attacked his doctrine, such as Servetus, Socinus, and Francis David, and to those who defended it, like Peter Melius."<sup>22</sup>

Anniversaries of people and events have called forth their share of published material as well and this has to be sought under the names of the people involved. For instance, in 1910 in Chicago there was held a series of meetings commemorating the *Anniversaries of the Birth and Death of Theodore Parker*. All the proceedings and addresses have been stenographically reported and published in a book by that title in 1911.

Searching under the names of Unitarian ministers will provide anyone interested with more books of sermons and inspirational addresses than he can read. In addition he will find they have written on various phases of science, history, economics, politics, and many more subjects. Shifting one's attention to the indexes of periodic literature you will find that in the author listings Unitarian ministers figure heavily.

Some of the men were so prominent and productive in the literary field that there are collections of their works. Some of them were asked by their churches for specific writings. There is a volume entitled *Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister*. This all started with a letter being sent by Mr. Parker to his congregation on January 9, 1859 which read in part, "I shall not speak to you today; for this morning, a little after four o'clock, I had a slight attack of bleeding in the lungs or throat." The congregation was stunned and sent back a letter expressing their sympathy and concern dated January 11, 1859. Mr. Parker left almost immediately for the West Indies to recuperate but so great was the attraction between minister and congregation that the correspondence continued and is here published with Mr. Parker giving some account of his early life and his ministry. Pick any well known Unitarian name and there is probably some writing listed under that heading.

Not the least among the writing activities of Unitarians has been their production of hymns and one might add their editing of service books for the use of the various congregations. Dr. Foote has amply cared for the interests of the Harvard hymn writers. It would be interesting to have a check list of Unitarian hymn writers and their hymns by first lines. Something of this sort has already been started at this library but has never been completed.

Unitarians were active in the field of religious education at a fairly early date. One instance is the publication in Boston in 1829 of *The Christian Teacher's Manual* designed for families and Sunday Schools. Sometime later the A. U. A. offered cash prizes to any person who could write books suitable to be used in the Sunday School.

I think the most fascinating problem I have run into so far as Unitariana is concerned is the tremendous development in the area of periodicals. One would think that in a land where Unitarianism got so early and then so firm a start that naturally the various periodicals would be listed or catalogued together, or at least be easily identified. Neither of these assumptions is the case. The volume of Unitarian periodical publication is staggering and completely out of line with the proportion of Unitarians in the population. Moreover we find that in each instance the publication was one of genuine worth and quality.

In some of the histories of the denominations there are brief sketches of the fact that a number of journals existed but there has not been gathered together in one place a chronological listing and description of Unitarian ventures into the periodical field together with the various allied publications which are of considerable interest to us.

Unitarian periodicals span the globe. In addition to those in England and the United States they were published in such places as Hungary where we have the *Kereszteny Magveto*, which is in this library, from 1863 to 1907 and scattered copies from then until 1949. Staying in Europe we have *Glaube Und Tat*, a Unitarian journal with the imprint telling us that it is the official organ of German Unitarianism. The Boston Public Library has Vol. 1 nos. 1-12 of a periodical called *Unitaren Religist Tidskrift* published in Christiana and probably representing some Norwegian Unitarian group. This covers a period from April 1906 to March 1907. As far as I can discover these are all the numbers which were ever published but I haven't given up yet.

Now we can jump to Japan where *Shukyo* (Religion) edited by Mr. Clay MacCauley was published from 1891-1898 when it changed its name to *Rikugo zasshi* and continued publication at least through 1920. There was also another magazine published in Japan called *Unitarian*. This was in 1890 and 1891 and probably was absorbed by *Shukyo*.

A simple listing of the titles of the various Unitarian periodicals which have been found would be rather boring. At present I do not have enough information about them nor do I have any assurance that the list is complete although the number at present is about one hundred. A careful list is being prepared with dates, editors, etc., and it is hoped that it will be available in good season. The list will also include Universalist publications.

Unitarian periodical publishing has been sponsored not by the denomination as such but has been the independent activity of individuals and



churches. This would seem to account for the large volume and variety in these publications. Because we do not have any listing of official Unitarian publications and so many people have had a part in building up this material a large number of these periodicals were not listed in any place where a searcher would find them. I have found them by searching through the stacks of Widener and Andover Harvard Libraries and by going through old boxes of pamphlet material. Others have been discovered by reading the card catalog. For example, the periodicals which begin with the words Western, such as *Western Conference Unitarian* were listed solely under Western as are all the printed materials of the Western Conference. About a dozen unlisted periodicals were found.

*Our Best Words* was published in the 1880's at Shelbyville, Ill. It was a semi-monthly paper for church and home and carried these words to define its purposes. "While frankly advocating that form of Christianity known as Unitarian this paper seeks to emphasize the UNIT rather than the ARIAN. It would seek union in spirit rather than in letter. It insists upon Christ as Master in morals and religion, and with him as Leader it aims to help in the glorious endeavor

To build the Universal Church  
Lofty as is the love of God,  
And ample as the wants of man."

*The Perfect Life* was a monthly paper published by the pastor of the First Unitarian Society of San Diego, Solon Lauer, emphasizing metaphysical considerations.

*The New Deal* published at Duluth, Minnesota is definitely Unitarian in tone and the Volume 1, number 3 for May 1888 carries an advertisement as follows:

STATUETTES OF EMERSON

by Sidney H. Morse, Sculptor. One-Fourth Life Size.  
Heartily praised by Rev. J. L. Jones, Rev. J. Vila Blake,  
Rev. George Batchellor and others.  
Price \$7.00.

There is no indication of the purpose for which St. Ralph might have been obtained.

*The Church Exchange* was published at Portland and Farmington, Maine and contains much news of Maine Unitarianism. In Volume 3, number 1 for October 1895 we read, "Annual meeting of the Alliance at Houlton, Maine, an address by the President reporting on the past year . . . 'At one of our Conferences at Belfast, dear good Dr. Palfrey arose at the close of an afternoon meeting and invited all his brother ministers to tea with him at his house. It was a surprise to all, and to no one more than to Mrs. Palfrey, to whom it was the first intimation of the ministerial tea party!'"



Moving closer to home we find a periodical called *Character* published by the Unity Club of Ware, Massachusetts which was an organization of the First Unitarian Church of Ware. This monthly dated 1893 was "Devoted to the cultivation of what is best in human thought and life."

We can move even closer to home than that. *The Open Church* was a monthly published "in the interests of practical religion." It was edited by George W. Cooke and published by the parish in East Lexington, Massachusetts. Volume 1 number 1 dated October 1894 carries a short article stating that it had become quite common to publish parish papers which thus publicized the church and supported the paper by the advertising and subscriptions. In part it states, "The parish in East Lexington uses two columns of this paper for its local interests, and that in Wellesley Hills uses one column." How many more of these parish papers there may be around I do not know but I suspect that some careful spade work ought to turn up some of them. The copies in this library were not even cataloged but in some loose material which Mr. Tanis inherited from some of his predecessors.

Many worthwhile items appear in the *Unitarian Quarterly Review*. One issue in the Civil War period was called *The Soldiers Companion*. In this issue there are many anti-slavery hymns, some signed and some unsigned. On page 463 is set forth the Star-Spangled Banner as we all know it except for an additional verse suitable to this period and written for the occasion by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

When our land is illumined with Liberty's smile  
If a foe from within strike a blow at her glory,  
Down, down with the traitor that dares to defile  
The flag of her stars and the page of her glory !  
By millions unchained who our birthright have gained,  
We will keep her bright blazon forever unstained !  
And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave  
While the land of the free is the home of the brave.

The *Index* first published in Toledo, Ohio and later at Boston was edited by Francis Ellingwood Abbot. There were 17 volumes published as a weekly from 1870 to 1886. The articles cover the whole range of liberal religious thought and it takes a firm Unitarian stand on all controversial questions. Unfortunately most of the articles were not signed beyond giving the initials of the contributor. In some cases the identity can be fairly easily worked out. Others will require considerable study by qualified persons. Some are impossible. The advertisements of lectures and books bring out a fact shown over and over in the periodicals, namely that women took a very prominent part in liberal religious activities though they were often hidden under a pseudonym. Volume 7 for the year 1876 gives evidence of much use in all sets of this work. An examination shows that

throughout this year there was a controversy raging in which the Unitarians took a lively interest. The question was whether or not religion in any form might be permitted in the public schools. The question of whether or not the Bible might be read or the Lord's Prayer used were matters of grave concern indeed and the question of parochial versus public schools also comes in for its share of argumentation. Reading the articles is like reading a present day paper except for the difference in names and dates. This periodical is complete in this library.

One of the most intriguing titles to me was that of the *Unitarian Baptist Advocate*. This was printed in London and the only trace I have found of it in this country is at the University of Minnesota Library where they have Volumes 1 through 3 dated 1837 to 1839.

Among the periodicals mentioned was an English one called *Monthly Repository*. Mr. Francis E. Mineka now of the University of Texas has written a very complete study of this publication called *The Dissidence of Dissent*.<sup>23</sup> His account of the history of the periodical reads with all the excitement of a fast moving novel yet is always careful and accurate. The *Monthly Repository* like so many journals of its day carried most of its articles signed only with pseudonyms. Mr. Mineka has puzzled these out and prepared a table for solving the riddles as completely as possible. This is printed at the back of the book. How useful and valuable this work is I think may well be illustrated by this quotation from the introduction, "Moncure D. Conway, prominent liberal American preacher who spent the chief years of his ministry in London, wrote in 1894 in his Centenary History of the South Place Society: 'In the *Monthly Repository* . . . you will find a better history than anywhere else of the progress of English thought and reform during the first twenty years of this chapel.'" The period covered is from 1806 to 1838.

*The Journal of the Ministry At Large*. We have two copies of this periodical, numbers one and two for February and March of 1841. This would be a particularly valuable item to complete, and we shall by transfer of a complete file from Widener. Poems, articles; and sermons are all included and the range stretches from an article on "Christianity In The Roman Empire" to one by Dr. Channing on "Wages of Females."

*Word and Work* was published in the late 1800's by the A. U. A. and is a very direct appeal on behalf of Unitarianism perhaps best characterized by the quotation from Paul at the top of each issue reading, "We also believe, and therefore speak."

Other periodicals were also straight forward and positive in their standards. *The Unitarian*, published at the New York Unitarian Headquarters, defined itself as "A magazine of definite progress and virile optimism in religion."

One could go on and on characterizing these publications and quoting interesting bits. What really needs to be done is to make a careful study of the history of such endeavors and pull it all together with a complete listing of what definitely was done, how much is needed and then go about securing them for the library.

We should not forget church calendars. Some of them contain a good deal of information. We have a few from the First Unitarian Society of Keokuk, Iowa dated 1897. An interesting item quite apart from information on the state of Unitarianism in Iowa is this bit. "Misses Cora and Lucia Pittman will go east for their summer vacation about the middle of June. They expect to go to Newton, Mass., a beautiful town, near Boston, which has been called 'The most civilized spot on Earth.'" In another issue of the same church calendar we learn that they are thinking of starting a parish paper. Did they ever do it? Is there then another Unitarian periodical still to be discovered? Only competent investigation will tell.

There have been quite a few yearbooks, annual registers, and the like issued by both A. U. A. and the various associations. We all know what sort of statistics these things contain and might well leave them alone until we need a specific figure. In the case of the Annual Register of A. U. A. in this library such action could be quite a loss. The Annual Register it happens contained poetry, hymns, articles, announcements and an almanac — not just any almanac, but a Unitarian Almanac. Let us take some representative dates and see what the important event for that day was. Friday, March 13, 1846. "Dr. Priestley was born in 1733," and across the page we find the moonrise, tides, etc. Monday, April 20, 1846, "Joseph Tuckerman died 1840." As the years go on there having been more and more Unitarians and Unitarian events they become more numerous in the Almanac.

The bound copy of this work for the years 1846 through 1852 came to Andover Harvard Library from a bequest of Rev. Richard Manning Hodges of Cambridge and was received October 23, 1878. The unusual thing about this is the fact that someone has interleaved the almanac sections with news items about the Unitarians of the time in manuscript. For December of 1846 there are these four manuscript insertions: "6th, Rev. C. C. Shackford entered upon the pastoral relation in Lynn on the 6th; 17th, this evening, the 17th, the Lexington meeting house having been remodelled, and being nearly completed, was entirely consumed by fire; 26th, Mrs. Annie Lizzie, wife of Rev. Ezra S. Gannett of Boston, and daughter of Bryant Tilden, Esq. of Boston, died on the 26th. She was born on the 13th of July, 1811; 30th, the death of Rev. R. Aspland, for forty years a distinguished minister for Unitarianism."<sup>24</sup> This activity of inserting such notes was a very common practice in the 1840's. It started some time earlier and continued on the part of elderly ministers and other professional people beyond the turn of the century. Many laymen did much the same thing. Some of the best

historical source material we have on Harvard College and on the Divinity School itself is contained in books such as these.

Another source of information not always used to the best advantage is what I have termed the thesis and special materials field. By special materials I mean diaries and private papers of ministers, professors, and others. Many of these things can be found in libraries. In the case of the professors, most of the Divinity School professors' papers have been placed in the university archives. Among these papers will be found such things as addresses to meetings of the Womens Alliance and similar groups. There are the notes for ordination sermons and similar addresses which were never published. Among the materials in the archives of this university and I suspect in others, are papers relating to the associations between the college and the local churches. In the old *Harvard Magazine* and the *Harvard Graduate's Magazine*<sup>25</sup> there are many articles having to do with religion in the university, the Divinity School and through these subjects with Unitarianism.

I suppose that one of the first sources of information to come to mind when seeking information about Harvard and its people in the earlier days is the writings of Mr. Sibley. In his *Private Journal*<sup>26</sup> which is available in the archives are references to "alterations of the Unitarian Church in Cambridge (797); Unitarian Laymen of Boston, the collations given for the clergy (33-34, 195, 609), Unitarianism at Harvard (36-40, 771), Laxness (771)."

Wherever there is a relationship between the church and an educational institution you are very apt to find the most unusual materials in the most unusual places.

These are not as readily available to the user of a library as they ought to be. In most cases they are not catalogued so as to be easily located. Usually there are many restrictions as to their use. In this university it is very difficult for the person not especially acquainted with the library system to locate thesis material by subject. Once having found a thesis there may be further difficulties as in the case of one at Harvard by a Mr. L. Townsend Small entitled *Unitarianism Down East*. There is a note attached to this work which says that it may be read only with the permission of the author.

A supplement to volume XVIII of *The Review of Religion*, 1954 titled *Doctoral Dissertations In The Field of Religion 1940-1952* (only 12 years) gives us some further materials such as: John Edward Dirks, *The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker*, Columbia University, 1947 — this was published by Columbia University Press in 1948 (p. 39); Edwin Richardson Edmonds, *The Principal of Social Correlation in the Social Ethics of Francis Greenwood Peabody*, Boston University, 1949 (p. 44); Carl Wilson McGeehon, *The Controversial Writings of William Ellery Channing*, State University of Iowa, 1940. An abstract of this was published in the University of



Iowa Doctoral Dissertations, Volume IV, (p. 99). There are many others which have a less direct bearing on Unitarianism as we know it. In all probability a good many others are in existence. I have not yet thoroughly investigated all the possibilities in this University alone. Meadville and Starr King are still wide open fields, as well as many other schools, as the sources of these few would indicate.

The matter of tracts and the like is a field in itself. The volume of materials is quite tremendous. Most of it is listed in the card catalog under American Unitarian Association. Here are arranged the Post Office Mission materials and similar things issued by the Laymen's League and other organizations. The collection here is nearly complete up to the mid-twentieth century and then the tendency of recent times to forget to deposit materials in libraries takes its toll. When I say that these things are listed that is exactly and all that I mean. There is no index or guide to subject matter or authors. Given a certain definite subject the only way to determine Unitarian pamphlet contributions on that topic is to examine the entire set of drawers of cards one by one. These drawers average at least 1000 cards to a drawer.

I suppose the chief aim of a library is to gather the tools of learning and then to preserve them as working units with an emphasis on the availability of any given item when it is wanted. Bibliographies and catalogs are probably the most widely known tools for discovering the precise material desired. Many items might just as well not be in the library if they cannot be easily located by the person who needs them when he needs them. Today this is precisely the case with a good deal of the material on Unitarianism. Add to this the fact that there is still a large amount of material which has not been brought into the library and so cannot be made available.

You are going to hear more about the library from Mr. Tanis and see some of it as well later. I would like to say a few words about the arrangements here myself before he gets his chance. I purposely have not compared notes with him because I figured he would not entirely approve of what I have to say, and I think we will dispense that part first.

I have been in and out of this library for 17 years, now almost eighteen. In that period of time I have seen people come and go. I have seen innovations and the resistance to innovations. The sheer physical fabric of the library has alternately improved and depreciated. Starting in January of 1957 there was another change so slight you hardly noticed it at first. Then it began to gather momentum and there were rumblings among the faculty and students. Remarks were made indicating that all the past glories of the school had suddenly gone down the drain and only undiluted chaos lay ahead. All this had happened so many times before and the library and University survived that I was perfectly content to wait and see what might



happen. I remembered a remark of Dr. Auer that the world never completely goes to the dogs because at the last moment someone always whistles. This time nobody whistled. They didn't need to. We finally have the man we need, where we need him, in James Tanis as librarian of the Harvard Divinity Library and we have been travelling in the direction of academically sound progressive library management and organization under his very enjoyable and skillful direction. There is no doubt that given the proper support he can make this the finest theological library there is in the world, which is what it ought to be. In addition and more important for this group he can make it the greatest library of Unitarian materials gathered anywhere on the globe — if he has your support as well as that of the school. Without the active support of groups such as this, and this one in particular, the task is extremely difficult. With the support and active cooperation of the membership of such an organization we can achieve the goals both you and we want that much more quickly and completely.

Probably the first step is ours here in the library and we have already undertaken to carry that out. It consists of gathering from the whole University Library system all the Unitarian materials and concentrating them in this building. Secondly, they will be properly catalogued so that they may be easily located when wanted. Thirdly, the materials already here will be so processed that they can be found readily. All this is already under way. When the transfers from Widener are completed we will rival any other collection of Unitariana anywhere but that is not our goal. We would like to surpass the other collections. We would like to be able to be of greater and more efficient service to the researcher than any other institution. After all that is the reason for having libraries and with your help we can and will accomplish these aims.

Unitarian material, much of it under its various disguises rather than as Unitarian, is to be found in the following places other than our theological libraries: Boston Public Library, Columbia University Library, Alleghany College Library, College of the Bible Library in Lexington, Ky., State University of Iowa Library where they have the works of Leigh Hunt who took time to identify the authors in the later volumes of the *Monthly Repository*. The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore, Essex Institute of Salem, Mass., Massachusetts Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Mass., are other places with known holdings. The trouble is we do not know just what those holdings are, or how much more they may have without knowing it. Only personal investigation will reveal this material. An inquiry as to what they have on Unitarianism would be too incomplete. We should not forget local historical societies either especially here in New England.

There are four main and logical places for the location of the materials needed. These are the library of the Unitarian Historical Society and the libraries of Harvard Divinity School, Meadville, and Starr King School.

These are also the places where the work of cataloging and making available these materials ought to be carried on. There remains a great deal to be done in the fields of cataloging and indexing. Beyond this there is still a good deal of translating into English which ought to be completed.

Sticking strictly to what there is in English and fairly close at hand, I think first attention should be given to the fact that we do not have a really complete bibliography of Unitarian materials such as we ought to have. Various attempts have been made from the 16th century to the 20th but there is need to gather and organize this material. It is a fact that at present we do not have an official bibliography of the official publications of the American Unitarian Association. Some listings have been made but we cannot point to a listing of those publications which have received official approval. Here arises the question of what might constitute official approval but I think that some working definition for the larger purpose in view could be found. Next in order would be the formulation of a list of Unitarian leaders both clerical and laymen whose writings and other activities have contributed to the development of the movement. This might very well be done on a regional basis with the three schools dividing this country and Canada among them, and exchanging the developed results.

A third step would be to gather primary outstanding source material which is the records of Unitarian parishes. Either the originals or copies should be deposited with regularity. These need not be removed permanently from the churches but copies on microfilm or recorded in some other way ought to be in safe repositories where they would be available to qualified students for study. The records of defunct, discontinued, or merged churches ought certainly to go to some place of safe keeping.

In all that is done there ought to be located somewhere a union catalog of Unitarian materials. One of the schools is the logical location. My nomination would be Harvard.

Especially in the nineteenth century, Unitarians were quite prolific in writing tracts and pamphlets. These together with sermons ought to be gathered and catalogued. We do have a great many but we have already indicated there are more. This is especially true in the field of sermons. Many sermons were privately printed or printed by the churches and there is no assurance at all that we have exhausted what may still be in the attics of older laymen or the back parlors, etc., of various churches particularly in the rural and older communities. In fact it has not been uncommon for whole books to be privately printed. On the West Coast Dr. Wilbur and others did collect just such material and deposit it in the Starr King School Library. More recently Dr. Crompton did much the same thing again up and down the Pacific Coast. We need to do it right here in New England and do it now before any more useful materials find their way into the trash can.

In addition to setting forth their thoughts in pamphlets, Unitarian thinkers have been very fond of writing for periodicals. They have also been quite adept at writing letters to the editor whether it be a journal or the public press. Much that we ought to have in our hands and readily at our disposal remains locked in the morgues of the early issues of newspapers present and past.

With regard to the large number of periodicals with a Unitarian sponsor or bias there is one very noteworthy problem. Almost all of these are without any indices. Many even have no tables of contents. Thus there are hidden away in these journals opinions and longer writings of prominent Unitarians which do not appear in the collected works of these same men. Frequently persons doing research on a Unitarian person or problem come to the Harvard Divinity Library. When they have exhausted the usual materials they ask about the back copies of periodicals. Usually they will start with the *Christian Register*. After about three hours of leafing through copies page by page they quit in disgust and that is the last we see of them. Those with a little better idea of the precise material they want may go straight to the *Monitor* or the *Unitarian Review* but the general results are always the same. These publications need to be gathered together in complete files on microfilm or by some such process. They also need to be indexed. Further a running index of some sort is needed for the current publications.

It may be argued that the *Register* has been covered to some degree in the International Index to Periodicals, Readers Guide and other such aids but those are only new upstart publications so far as Unitarian publications are concerned. The most prolific period for Unitarianism precedes the days of indices and nicely organized methods of library management. Today we are rapidly reaching the point of no return if we are to preserve and make useful this portion of our Unitarian heritage.

Paper only lasts so long, and newsprint is among the most perishable. The copies we now have in safe keeping are rapidly deteriorating. Our chances of filling in the gaps in our present collections is constantly growing smaller. There are ministers and laymen alike in our denomination who have books and papers which would be valuable in this cause but we do not receive them because they assume that of course Harvard or the Divinity School probably already has this. If we haven't it we want it. If we have it we know someone else who does want it. Anyone who attempts to seek out historical material here in this University concerning a topic which stretches in time from the earliest days of our history to the present will soon find himself in the awkward situation of having far more material on the eighteenth century than he has on the twentieth. Within the twentieth century there is far more material available for the period before 1930

than there is for the time between 1930 and today. With all our supposed efficiency we are not keeping up to date in our storehouses of knowledge.

One may well ask what the hope is of arranging Unitarian materials so that the student or interested person might find the precise piece of writing they want when they want it. Frankly I think the chances are very good if two things can be brought into accord. The first item is the matter of the expense involved in carrying out the work. To catch up to date on the work is really a life time, full time job. A person could conceivably devote all his energies to it and not complete the task. Such a person would have to have both a means of livelihood and the funds with which to work to procure materials needed. There would have to be the physical space to care for the material. The microfilming of the Wilbur catalog which I mentioned would be quite reasonable, including the cost of turning the film back into cards. These cards will then have to be filed in a suitable cabinet so that they can be used. With problems such as these I think that the work would have to be a cooperative venture on the part of a library such as the Harvard Divinity Library and school such as Harvard Divinity School and one or more interested organizations such as this one meeting here tonight.

The need is apparent. The likelihood of success is still excellent. The methods and facilities exist. There are still interested persons. Can they or will they implement these potentialities?

What such an endeavor would mean in the spiritual and intellectual life of a thinking nation I think can be set forth very well in these lines concerning the import and place of history in our lives:

"The study of history can steady us, making us more alert to man's continuing aspirations, more generous in our understanding of the forms they take, more patient and humorous in our loyalty to them. And it can chasten us, reminding us that men and their affairs are an episode on a larger stage, that men have not set the broad conditions under which their history takes place, and that they convert these conditions into opportunities only by understanding them and acquiescing in them. The progress of the human mind toward theories about human nature and social structures would allow the study of history to bring stability to men's memories and a greater amplitude to their ability to select in the present."<sup>27</sup>

## NOTES

1. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia* (Edition of 1853) Vol. II, p. 33.
2. Boston, 1957.
3. Cambridge, Mass., 1945. p. 3 n. 1.
4. Feldkirch, Selbstverlag Stella Matutina, 1931.
5. Boston, 1957. pp. 172-174.
6. Boston, 1952. pp. 276-284.
7. Boston, 1957. pp. 155-157.
8. Vol. XXV, The Library of Christian Classics, Philadelphia, 1957.
9. A bound photocopy of this typescript is in the reference room of Harvard Divinity School Library.
10. Boston, 1930.
11. Boston, 1928.
12. pp. 82-84.
13. p. 111.
14. Privately printed in Salem, 1930.
15. 3 Vols. Boston, 1882-1940.
16. 3 Vols. London, 1850.
17. London, 1840.
18. Boston, 1903.
19. 4 Vols. Boston, 1910-1952.
20. London, 1814.
21. Boston, 1847.
22. Supplement to Vol. XVIII *The Review of Religion*, 1954 "Doctoral Dissertations In the Field of Religion 1940-1952." p. 162.
23. Chapel Hill, 1944.
24. Boston, 1842-1856.
25. Boston, Vols. 1-42, 1892-1912.
26. Harvard College Library Archives has this material.
27. Charles Frankel, *The Case for Modern Man*, New York, 1956, pp. 161-162.



*An Historical Essay:*

THE MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION  
OF  
CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS

BY

REV. HAROLD FIELD WORTHLEY  
OF  
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

An Expanded Version of  
The Address Delivered Before the Convention at Its  
Annual Meeting, May 7, 1956

An Historical Essay .....	47
Footnotes .....	64
Officers of the Convention .....	68
Bibliography of the Convention:	
Key .....	69
Official Records of the Convention .....	69
Convention Sermons and Addresses .....	70
Histories of the Convention .....	95
Other Reliquiae of the Convention .....	96

*An Historical Essay:*

THE MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION  
OF  
CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS

One of the characters in Lewis Carroll's saga of Wonderland remarks that, when one is telling a story, one really ought to begin at the beginning. However, this excellent suggestion presupposes a certain knowledge of beginnings which, with respect to the subject of this essay, has not been made available to students of New England's ecclesiastical history. There has been a tendency among historians of the Convention to represent the origins of this venerable ministerium as being helplessly obscured by the dark curtain of intervening years. What follows, then, is partly an attempt to gather together whatever slender threads of information may be found, weaving them into some semblance of a pattern, so that the full history and nature of the Convention can be easily discerned.<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally, the story of the relationships among members of the clergy in the Massachusetts-Bay Colony begins with that oft-cited passage from John Winthrop's *Journal*, dated November, 1633:

The ministers in the bay and Sagus did meet, once a fortnight, at one of their houses by course, where some question of moment was debated. Mr. Skelton, the pastor of Salem, and Mr. [Roger] Williams, who was removed from Plymouth thither, (but not in any office, though he exercised by way of prophecy,) took some exception against it, as fearing it might grow in time to a presbytery or superintendency, to the prejudice of the churches' liberties. But this fear was without cause; for they were all clear in that point, that no church or person can have power over another church; neither did they in their meetings exercise any such jurisdiction, etc.<sup>2</sup>

During the course of the following half-century, such ministerial gatherings increased in frequency and regularity, as opportunity presented itself.<sup>3</sup> The gradual development of these meetings into something like the modern "ministerial association" has been set forth several times, and need not be repeated here. It will suffice to note that such proto-associational gatherings consisting of members of the clergy were local in nature, and met at stated intervals throughout the year, circumstances permitting.

At the same time that this development was taking place, the custom of holding special or "occasional" meetings was continued by the clergy, particularly in connection with Election Week; this is the seed from which the Convention grew. At this point, however, it should be noted that there is a

certain ambiguity with respect to the use of words such as "council," "synod," and "convention," as these words were originally employed by writers living in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For our purposes, the term "convention" may be restricted to mean "an occasional gathering of members of the clergy, the nature of such a meeting being purely consultative and its power solely advisory, as concerns the state and welfare of religious interests."<sup>4</sup>

The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers (often referred to as "the General Convention" or simply as "the Convention") can be shown to be an outgrowth of the earlier occasional ministerial gatherings of the sort reported by Winthrop and, later, by Cotton Mather. But from what year, then, can the Convention be dated? Recent Historians have been wont to suggest the year 1680.<sup>5</sup> The warrant for such a conclusion has generally been the studiously ambiguous report presented by Cotton Mather:

Know then, that according to the advice of Mr. *Hooker*, who about a week before he fell sick of his last, let fall these words, *We must Agree upon constant Meetings of Ministers, and settle the Consociation of Churches, or else we are utterly undone!* It has been the care of the Ministers, in the several Vicinages throughout the most part of the Country, to establish such *constant Meetings*, whereat they have *informed* one another of their various exercises, and *assisted* one another in the Work of our Lord: besides a general Appearance of all the Ministers in each Colony, once a Year, at the *Town*, and the *Time* of the *General Court* for *Elections of Magistrates* in the Colonies.<sup>6</sup>

The "Mr. Hooker" to whom Mather refers would be Thomas Hooker of Connecticut, who died in 1647; it would be an error, however, to assume that this passage is of a single piece, and that the Convention may thus be dated from the middle of the seventeenth century. Immediately following the passage just cited, Mather introduces a set of rules by which an early ministerial association governed itself; the association referred to is the "Boston-Charlestown Association," which was not formed until 1690, forty-three years after Hooker's death!

Without doubt the problem of accurately dating the beginning of the Convention has been complicated by an inclination on the part of historians to minimize the importance of knowing just when various early descriptions of this ministerium were written. Mather's *Magnalia* (from which we have quoted above) was completed sometime in 1698, and published in London in 1702; the references to the Convention to be found in its pages are uniformly marginal in nature, indicating that the Convention itself was just entering into its period of formal organization. Mather's *Diary* which begins with the year 1681, makes no real mention of this ministerium until 1699, despite the fact that, had the Convention existed much earlier, Mather himself would have been a member and, presumably, would have noted at least its existence if not its activities.<sup>7</sup> To discover Mather's full description

of the Convention, one must turn to his *Ratio Disciplinae Nov-Anglorum*, published quite some years later, in 1726:

They have no *Provincial Synods*; and their *Occasional Synods*, on special Emergencies, and of smaller Dimensions, are but as the *Occasions* happen for them. The Thing among them that is the nearest thereunto, is a *General Convention* of Ministers (which perhaps are not above half) belonging to the *Province*, at the time of the *Anniversary Solemnity*, when the *General Assembly* of the Province meets, on the last *Wednesday* in the month of *May*, to elect their *Counsellors* for the Year ensuing. Then the *Ministers*, chusing a *Moderator*, do propose Matters of public Importance, referring to the Interest of Religion in the Churches; and tho' they assume no *Decisive Power*, yet the Advice which they give to the People of GOD, has proved of great Use unto the Country.

There is now taken up the Custom, for (*Concio ad Clerum*,) a Sermon to be Preached unto the Convention of Ministers, on the Day after the *Election*, by one of their Number, chosen to it by their *Votes*, at their Meeting in the preceeding year.

At this *Convention*, Every Pastor that meets with singular Difficulties, has Opportunity to bring them under Consideration. But the question most usually now considered, is of this Importance: *What may be further purposed, for the preserving and promoting of true PIETY in the Land?*

Excellent Things have been here Concerted and Concluded, for, *The Propagation of Religion*; and *Collections* produced for that Purpose in all the Churches.

And Motions have been hence made unto the *General Assembly* for such Acts and Laws as the *Morals* of the People have called for.

[The *Governour* of the Province, and such Counsellors as dwell in the City of *Boston*, together with the *Representatives* of the Town, & the Speaker of their House; are invited also to dine with the *Ministers*, at the Table, which the *Deacons* of the united Churches in *Boston* provide for them, the Day after the *Election*: Some small Resemblance of what is called, *The Feast of Moses and Aaron*, in the Netherlands.]<sup>8</sup>

Upon careful examination, it becomes evident that Mather was describing the Convention as it existed *circa* 1726. The practice of holding Election Day on the last Wednesday of May dates from 1692,<sup>9</sup> while the custom of having a Convention Sermon was begun in 1721, the Reverend Dr. Increase Mather having been elected to preach it by vote of the ministerium in 1720.<sup>10</sup> Indebted though we may be to Cotton Mather for his depiction of the Convention during its formative years, we cannot take his description as a warrant for reading its existence back as far as 1680.<sup>11</sup>

Instead, there seems to be every reason to agree with that anonymous historian who, in 1795, wrote:

The Congregational Ministers of the late province, now commonwealth, of Massachusetts, from the beginning of the government under the charter of 1692 [issued in 1691], have practiced the holding of a convention in Boston, on the next day after the general election of counsellors.<sup>12</sup>

The Convention, as such, was inseparable from Election Day, and therefore could not have met from 1686 to 1692.<sup>13</sup> nor is there any trustworthy account of its having existed prior to either of these two dates. The Convention itself, then, must have assumed organized form between 1692 and 1694, drawing upon the clergy's custom of holding unorganized meetings when Election



Day brought them together in one locale. After 1694, this ministerium gained enough of a sense of its own organic nature to be able to present its corporate opinions on a variety of matters of public concern. By 1718, it had chosen a moderator (the ubiquitous Cotton Mather), and, as noted above, in 1721 there began the almost unbroken series of Convention Sermons (lately called Addresses).<sup>14</sup>

The members of the Convention were not slow to "propose Matters of public Importance," once they were formally organized. In 1694, a committee appointed "in the name and with the Unanimous Desire and Consent of the Ministers met at Boston" apprised the General Court of difficulties created by ambiguous laws concerning the settlement of ministers.<sup>15</sup> In 1695, this committee again approached the Court, pleading that the matter might be resolved by interpretation or further legislation; at the same time, the committee called for stronger laws to deal with violators of the liquor code and to provide sterner punishment for those convicted of the crime of incest.<sup>16</sup> In 1697, "no less than thirty Ministers in this Province" (quite probably the whole Convention) attacked certain deviations from congregational order in the Massachusetts-Bay area; the next year, this same group affirmed the concept of the church covenant to be scripturally founded.<sup>17</sup>

Cotton Mather informs us that, in 1699, he persuaded the Convention to present a plea on behalf of the schools to the Assembly, and that circumstances required him to duplicate his performance in 1700.<sup>18</sup> His father, Increase Mather, has also left a record of the activities of the Convention meeting of 1700, viz.:

The Pastors in this Province, did at a General Convention of them at Boston, May 30, 1700. Pass the following vote, *To prevent the great mischief to the Evangelical Interests, that may arise from the unadvised proceedings of People to gather Churches in the Neighbourhood, it is provided, that the Result of the Synod, in 1662, relating to the Consociation of Churches may be Republished, with an Address to the Churches, Intimating our desires (and so far as we are Concerned our purposes) to see that Advice carefully attended, and the irregular Proceedings of any People hereafter contrary to that Advice, not Encouraged.*<sup>19</sup>

The elder Mather remarks that he addressed the ministerium at some length on this occasion.

In 1701, according to Samuel Sewall "the President [of Harvard College] refused to be among the Ministers at their Annual Meeting," although Sewall does not go further into the matter, the implication is plain that there was some kind of disagreement which prompted the President's refusal.<sup>20</sup> The year following, the Convention, prodded by Cotton Mather, denounced certain heretical tendencies, — but let Mather tell the story himself:

And at the General Convention of our Ministers, in Boston (at the Election) the Lord accepted me to do several Services for Him. Especially this: I considered, how much the glorious *Doctrines of Grace* are depraved, and deserted, even in the Churches of the Reformation, and especially in the English Nation:

and, how much Danger there is, lest the Churches of New England and our younger Clergy in them, should lose those glorious *Doctrines of Grace* and be poisoned by vile *Pelagian* Books, that from beyond-sea, are vended among us. Wherefore, I composed a System of those illustrious Doctrines; and I composed it in express Terms fetch'd from the *Articles* and *Homiles* of the Church of England; foreseeing a manifold Advantage in my doing so.

This my brief System, I accompanied with lively Warnings unto the Churches, telling them, how much the Vitals of Christianity, were concerned, in the Preservation of those *Doctrines*, adding also, proper Cautions against *Antinomian* Abuses of them. God so assisted and prospered my Speeches among the Ministers, that they voted for the publishing of this Instrument unto the Churches as their *Testimony* to the Interests of the Gospel.

It is entituled, A SEASONABLE TESTIMONY TO THE GLORIOUS DOCTRINES OF GRACE, NOW MANY WAYES UNDERMINED IN THE WORLD.<sup>21</sup>

The years 1704 to 1706 saw the Convention deeply concerned that a stronger system of consociation be adopted by the Massachusetts churches. To this end, the ministerium issued a circular letter to the churches:

Boston, I. d. IV. m. 1704

To Serve the Great Intentions of Religion, which is lamentably decaying in the Country: It is proposed,

I. That the *Pastors* of the Churches do *personally Discourse* with the *Young People* in their Flocks, and with all Possible Prudence and Goodness endeavor to win their Consent unto the *Covenant of Grace*, in all the Glorious Articles of It.

II. That unto this Purpose, the *Pastors* do take up that Laborious, but engaging Practice, of making *Personal Visits* unto all the Families that belong unto their Congregations.

III. That the *Pastors* in this Way of Proceeding, bring on their People as far as they can, publicly, and solemnly to Recognize the *Covenant* of GOD, and come into such a Degree of the *Church-State*, as they shall be willing to take their Station in: But not to leave off, till they shall be qualified for, and persuaded to, Communion with the Church in *all* special Ordinances.

IV. That for such as have submitted unto the *Government* of CHRIST in any of His Churches, no *Pastors* of any other Churches, any way go to shelter them under their Wing, from the *Discipline* of those, from whom they have not been fairly recommended.

V. That they who have not actually Recognized their Subjection to the *Discipline* of CHRIST in His Church, yet should, either upon their *obstinate Refusal* of such a Subjection, or their falling into other *Scandals*, be faithfully treated with proper *Admonitions*: About the Method and Manner of managing which *Admonitions*, the *Pastors* with their several Churches, will be left unto the Exercise of their own discretion.

VI. It is desired and intended, if the Lord please, That at the *General Convention* of the Ministers, there may be given in by each of the *Pastors* present, An Account of their *Progress* and *Success* in that holy Undertaking, which has been proposed: That so, the Lord may have the *Glory of His Grace*, and the *Condition of Religion* may be the better known and served among us.

VII. As a Subserviency to those Good and Great Intentions, it is proposed, that the *Associations* of the Ministers in the several Parts of the Country may be

strengthened; And the several *Associations* may by *Letters* hold more free Communications with one another.<sup>22</sup>

In November of 1704, the Cambridge-Boston Association incorporated these seven proposals in a circular letter of its own devising, forwarding this letter to the churches in order that the work of buttressing ecclesiastical government might be speeded on its way.<sup>23</sup> In May, 1705, the Convention went on record as favoring "a further extension of associational powers," going so far as to designate a time and place when representatives of the several associations should meet to blueprint the desired modifications.<sup>24</sup> The projected meeting took place in Boston, on Sept. 11, 1705, and resulted in the so-called *Proposals of 1705*.<sup>25</sup> The Convention gave its formal consent to these *Proposals* at its meeting in the year following.<sup>26</sup> The necessary legislative action, however, was not forthcoming, so that the matter dragged on for some years. Finally, the Convention issued a formal appeal to the General Court in 1725, requesting that a synod be called to resolve the problem. This appeal was ignored.<sup>27</sup>

Thus ended the first period of the Convention's history and, with it, an era in the story of the Massachusetts clergy. The authority of the ministers no longer extended into the realm of civil legislation. Perhaps it is ironic that the Convention, from which came the plan for increasing the strength of the ecclesiastical structure, should have been born at the same time and of the same circumstances as its eventual nemesis, the charter of 1691. This charter had placed the upper House of the Massachusetts legislature under the control of both the appointive power of the General Court and the veto power of the governor. The governor, a royal appointee and generally an Anglican, was of no mind to allow the passage of a bill which would materially strengthen congregational authority in his domain; therefore, the *Proposals* were actually doomed to failure from the moment of their inception. Finally realizing this fact, in 1725 the Convention lapsed into silence, confining itself until 1743 to the publication of certain Convention Sermons.

Before considering the Sermons preached to the Convention, it seems proper to remark on one puzzling aspect of the description of this ministerium given to us by Cotton Mather in his *Ratio Disciplinae Nov-Anglorum*, namely, the custom which the ministers followed of inviting selected public officials to dine with them on the day after the Election. According to Mather, this dinner bore "Some small Resemblance of what is called, *The Feast of Moses and Aaron*, in the Netherlands." The implications of the reference are plain enough, *viz.*, table-fellowship of the clergy with members of the magistracy. However, even though such a custom would fit well with what we know of the intimate relationships between those two classes in the early history of Massachusetts, no clue remains today to explain to us the cited Dutch prototype of this "feast."

That the custom was observed in the manner which Mather reports is confirmed by Samuel Sewall's *Diary*. On May 31, 1705, Sewall noted: "Govr, Major Brown, Sewall, Higgenson, dine at Mr. [Samuel] Willard's with the Ministers." On at least one occasion Miriam was invited to the "Feast of Moses and Aaron," for, in 1711, the widows of two clergymen were in attendance (as were several candidates for the ministry). In 1713, Sewall wrote: "The Four Churches [First, Second, South, and Brattle Street] Treat the Ministers, and Councillors in Town at the Exchange Tavern."<sup>28</sup>

Doubtless the ministers took advantage of the atmosphere of restrained conviviality which would characterize such a "Feast" to press their opinions upon the public officials present; however, it would be well to recall that the backbone of the Massachusetts "theocracy" had been broken some years before, so that such a custom is no warrant for assuming that the magistracy was "clergy-ridden." As a matter of fact, the custom was abandoned by 1748 (in all probability, it was dropped *circa* 1726), testifying to the ever-widening rift between ecclesiastical and civil interests.

The most complete statement of the objects of the Convention is to be found in the *Historical Sketch of the Convention* published in 1821. The *Sketch* reports:

. . . its [the Convention's] design has been, to promote brotherly love and religious improvement; to give advice to ministers in difficult cases; to consider the best means for preserving and promoting piety; to concert measures for the propagation of religion, and to promote collections for that purpose; to act in concert, as far as suitable to the ministerial character, in all matters of general concern, respecting the interests of religion, and the order, peace, liberties, and prosperity of the Congregational Churches; to hold correspondence with other associated pastors and churches, relative to the interests of the church and of religion; to aid poor parishes in supporting their ministers; to assist indigent ministers, their widows and orphan children; to provide funds for the relief of widows and orphans of ministers, and to direct the distribution of this charity; to bear testimony against prevailing errors in doctrine, discipline, or manners; to remonstrate to delinquent churches and people concerning neglect to support the gospel; and to recommend whatever may be of general use to ministers and churches, or to the commonwealth and country.<sup>29</sup>

These goals are mirrored in the public utterances and varied activities of the Convention; even so, one may find many an example of a member's personal bias leading the Convention into areas of consideration not included in the above-cited "statement of purpose."

It was in a private home, probably that of the Reverend Dr. Joseph Sewall, that the first Convention Sermon was given by Dr. Increase Mather two hundred and thirty-five years ago, thereby inaugurating a custom which has continued, almost without a break in the sequence, down to the present day.<sup>30</sup> In 1729, the Convention voted to make the Sermon a public occasion, so that, for the first time, the Convention Preacher (Rev. Benjamin Colman)



addressed the laity as well as the clergy.<sup>31</sup> It seems likely that this change in procedure was motivated by concern for the charitable interests of the Convention, past experience having suggested to its members that the annual collection could doubtless stand the reinforcement of lay participation. Furthermore, since clerical influence over civil officialdom was rapidly waning (as witness the decline and abandonment of "The Feast of Moses and Aaron"), it may well be that the Convention, by inviting the laity to hear its annual Sermon, hoped to regain at least some semblance of its role as a formulator of public opinion.

The utterances of the Convention Preachers form a tapestry of clerical interests and prejudices extending over the years, demonstrating that, even with the high seriousness of the occasion held firmly in the speaker's mind, a clergyman is never more prone to the making of *ex cathedra* statements than when he is addressing his peers.

Perhaps nothing is more natural than that a Convention Preacher should comment on pulpit mannerisms. So it was that Charles Chauncy, the strong opponent of revivalism, quite possibly thinking of the candidates for the ministry among his listeners, warned in 1744:

In fine, Ministers should not be wanting in a Care about the *external Manner* of their preaching. This indeed is a Matter of the least Importance; though, perhaps, most recommending to the Generality of People: For which Reason, it would not be mispent Labour, if Ministers took some Pains that they might be Masters of a *good Pronunciation*, and *becoming Gesture*: To be sure, they should avoid disagreeable *Tones* and *Whines*; as either unnatural *Distortions of Countenance*, and *Motions of the Body*: Neither should they turn *Mimicks*, endeavoring to *speak* and *act*, not like themselves, but those they admire . . . .<sup>32</sup>

Homiletical styles, however, come and go; a problem of more enduring importance, that of sermon content, has found expression in a far larger number of Convention Sermons. In this latter area, let John Todd, preaching in 1853, provide a vivid example of the follies of "popular sermons:"

I appeal to our daily city papers, and ask if it be not humiliating, to see how the pulpit has to watch each event, spread sail to every blow of the wind, and advertise how it will do this and that! So we have great sermons on political questions, on railroads, great water sermons, and casualty sermons and all that. One would almost imagine that a great blow-up or break-down was a real God-send to the pulpit; and that all manner of out-of-the-way plans were proper, by which to tickle the ear, even for a moment, of the multitudes who are rushing over the earth.

If the Convention Sermons are read in chronological order, it soon becomes evident that the ministerial ideal with respect to pastoral duties has undergone a decided change over the course of the years. Cotton Mather, in 1722, and Nehemiah Walter, in 1723, strongly believed that the major part of a minister's time should be spent in his study. By 1742, however Israel Loring found reason to lead the clergyman out of the study, charging



him with a great list of public duties, most of which would be quite familiar to the hard-pressed cleric of today. Throughout this conceptual evolution, the Convention Preachers have consistently emphasized the high nature of the ministerial calling, exalting it as a vocation to be preferred above all others; not a few of the annual *conciones ad clerum* have given stern warning against any lowering of ministerial standards. In spite of such precautionary measures, Henry Jenks found reason to complain in 1898: "Men of weak ability, unable to succeed in other walks of life, take shelter in the ministry."

Convention Preachers have not been slow to call attention either to contemporary moral lapses or to deviations from the current norm of belief. John Barnard, in 1738, bewailed the predilection among members of the clergy for the study of philosophy, while, in 1741, Edward Holyoke, the President of Harvard College, identified the enemies of true religion as being Arminianism, Antinomianism, Arianism, and Socinianism. By 1753, the common enemy was "natural religion," if we may believe Samuel Phillips; in 1797, "deism" was extensively denounced by David Tappan.

The 1740's saw the Convention embroiled in a controversy over revival measures, with Joshua Gee leading the proponents of revivalism and Charles Chauncy the Arminians. This unhappy situation, which for a time threatened to give birth to a rival pro-Gee "convention," was at last rather impolitely resolved by an anonymous layman who, signing himself "J. F.," publicly denounced the pro-revival activities of Joshua Gee as "the Offspring of a broken and disordered Mind . . . ." <sup>33</sup> Highly influential in easing the tensions engendered by this controversy was the "middle-of-the-road" Sermon preached before the Convention in 1743 by Nathaniel Appleton. Thus ended the first internal conflict to disrupt the even tenor of the ministerium's ways; of later tensions we shall have something to say further on in this essay.

The relationship between religion and civil government has consistently been a fruitful topic for Convention Sermons. The Preacher for 1726, William Williams, assured his auditors that the Kingdom of God "in no ways interferes with the rights of the Kings of Earth, but more than anything serves to make them sit easy upon their thrones." In 1762, Samuel Mather as Convention Preacher paid tribute to the magistracy in their capacity as protectors of the "Standing Order:"

We must acknowledge, with Thankfulness to the glorious *Head of the Church* and Lord of the World, and at the same Time with due Honour to the *Government* over us, that these our Fathers have shewed *their Care* of these churches by *enacting good Laws* for their *Enjoyment of their Privileges and Freedoms respecting Divine Worship, Church Order and Discipline, and for their Encouragement in the peaceable and regular Profession and Practice thereof; which Laws*, having received the Royal Sanction, *render our Churches* as much as they can be *the established Churches* of this Province.

Mather, however, was dreaming of an era that was fast passing away; a few years would witness the winning of American independence, and the birth of a new concept of church-state relationships. Witness the words of Thomas Barnard, in 1793:

The time is hastening, when all unnatural mixtures of civil and religious power will be taken away; when the Magistrate will have the sole charge of the bodies, liberties, and estates of his subjects; and the Ministers of Religion will be confined to their improvement in piety and virtue, and preparation for the eternal world beyond the grave.

In fact, only three years later, Jeremy Belknap found cause to remark on the swing of the pendulum of popular opinion which, in 1796, barred political topics from pulpits of Massachusetts. Belknap noted wryly: "It is very strange that we may not preach on the same subjects which are recommended to us as subjects of prayer."

It is impossible to do more here than to merely suggest the wide variety of interests which go to make up the fabric of the Convention Sermons. One might go on to quote at random from the strange millennial beliefs of Thomas Prince (1740), or from the aristocratic social views of Samuel Phillips (1753). Certainly we have not outgrown Samuel Locke's admonitions to seek out truth (1722), nor Joseph Dana's exaltation of the mysteriousness of Christianity (1801). There is the chance moment of drama, as when Cotton Mather remarks: "Yea, If the worst Thing you do for the People be only to save their Lives from the tremendous *Destroyer* [i. e., smallpox], for THIS very Thing (*O perpetuam — Infamiam*) they will seek to *Destroy* and *Murder* you." Mather spoke from experience; his championing of inoculation against smallpox had prompted some anonymous critic to throw a bomb into his study. There are, as well, instances of unintentional humor, as witness Jedidiah Morse extolling the orthodox virtues of the newly founded Andover Theological School to a Convention composed chiefly of Harvard graduates (1812).

In all of this, it is to be doubted if any Convention Preacher has taken his place before that gathering without realizing that he is participating in a venerable yet vital continuum; surely, each and every Convention Preacher in his turn must have wished that he could be as certain of his subject as was Cotton Mather in 1722, when he stood up and announced: ". . . Syres, *I have a Message from GOD unto you!*"

The Sermons and Convention publications make up only a part of the ministerium's story; an equally informative source of the Convention's doings are its official Minutes, begun on May 25, 1748, when it was voted "to procure a blank book."<sup>34</sup> Other business in that year included the reading of the minutes of the previous annual meeting, the approving of the year's accounts, and the appointment of a committee to inquire about a farm at South Kingston, all handled in such a manner as to testify that the Convention

was operating under an already-existing set of rules. After adjournment, the ministers took dinner at Dr. Joseph Sewall's home, a custom long established and continued until Dr. Sewall's death.

The entries in the Minutes for these early years indicate that charitable ventures were often taken under consideration. What Harding has called the Convention's "first recorded act of public moment" was the ministerium's plea for a collection in all the churches for the propagation of Christianity;<sup>35</sup> at the same time, the ministers set up a fund to finance missions to impoverished towns. The minister of South Kingston was voted £100, old tenor, and his people admonished for neglecting his support. In 1754, the Minutes note: "Read, a Paper recommending a Subscription for the Revd. Mr. Park, on the Burning of his House."

In 1756, the Convention, despite its fear that it might be accused of acting as a standing council, rendered an opinion regarding irregular methods involved in an installation at South Falmouth. Two years later, the Convention passed resolutions advising obedience to the civil authorities; the next year, at the request of His Majesty's Council, the ministers publicly denounced disorders (chiefly drunkenness) accompanying ordinations. Letters of congratulation were voted to George III upon his accession to the throne of England in 1762, and to Francis Barnard upon his appointment to the governorship in the same year.

1763 saw the Convention's annual collection applied for the first time to the relief of indigent widows and orphans of clergymen (as well as to needy ministers still in service). By 1766, the ministerium had received a bequest from the estate of a Christianized Jew, Judah Monis.<sup>36</sup> The following year, steps were taken to form a corporation to hold the accumulating monies of the Convention; this action resulted, after much delay, in the formation of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society in 1786. At this juncture, the Convention turned its accumulated funds over to the Society, to be held and improved in the same manner as the Society's independent monies.<sup>37</sup>

The ministerium's concern for the proper maintenance of congregational church order prompted the publication, in 1773, of an extensive report, the main point of which was to insist that no church should despoise a duly-elected officer without the advice of an ecclesiastical council. During the unsettled years of the Revolutionary War, the Convention's monies were sent into the country (and no collection was taken in 1775); the ministers responded with patriotic fervor to the plea of the provincial Congress for chaplains for the army, announcing their willingness to serve in rotation, subject to the consent of their several congregations. In 1776, the Convention met in Watertown, at the house of the Widow Coolidge.

The ministerium maintained extensive correspondence with its own and other denominations, in 1791 with the Baptists and Quakers, and up to 1795

with Presbyterians and Congregationalists (both in and outside of Massachusetts). This last activity resulted in the publication of an elaborate report on "the number, and name of the Congregational associations, ministers, candidates, and vacancies in the Commonwealth." During these years the Convention sent letters of congratulations to various state and national officials upon their election to office, the letter (1798) to President John Adams indicating by its guarded tone the way in which political feelings grew heated in the days of the Federalist-Jeffersonian controversy.

In the 1790's the Convention began to be divided by theological partisanship once again, this being heralded by the election of Jedidiah Morse to the office of Convention Scribe. The vote, in 1796, to admit visiting clergymen to Convention membership meant that orthodox ministers (particularly, one suspects, from Connecticut) might be imported, at crucial points, to strengthen the orthodox majority. In 1804, the Convention communicated with the several associations of Massachusetts to ascertain the extent to which they might be persuaded to support "a general Association of Congregational Ministers." In 1809, the "district of Maine" inquired of the Convention:

Whether according to the practice of the New England Churches, & consistently with gospel order, a minor part of the church, when the proceedings of the majority have been duly examined & approved by a mutual council, & apostolic exhortations have been given in the result of such council to mutual forgiveness & charity, can be erected by an ex-parte council into a church of the same denomination & within the same precincts.

The Convention refused to render an opinion, on the grounds that the question was "too abstract."

Controversy between orthodox and liberal members of Convention infected the annual Sermons as well, beginning with that of David Tappan (1797), a close friend of Jedidiah Morse. There followed a decade of orthodox pronouncements, prompting John Reed in 1807 to plead that both parties take a broad view of the controversy, since even the original Apostles were not always agreed on points of theology. His plea was ignored, however, and the polemical tone of the Sermons mounted higher with each year. Morse himself added fuel to the flames in 1812 when he warned against the danger of believing too little as well as too much, while Alvan Hyde in 1817 arraigned the liberals on charges of heresy, crying that heretics are "no less exposed to the wrath of God, than they who live in wicked and immoral practices." When, in 1822, the Worcester North Association asked the Convention to decide: "What constitutes a Christian church with which we ought to hold communion?", the question was tabled by a vote so close as to testify to the existence of two hostile parties. A resolution proposing that orthodox and liberal preachers alternate in the Convention pulpit was indefinitely postponed. Then, gradually, the voices of peacemakers began to be heard



above the tumult, those of Leonard Woods (1823) and Abiel Abbot (1827) being perhaps the most persuasive.

A committee was appointed in 1829 to resolve the difficulty created by partisan preaching; this committee deliberated for two years, but could only report its inability to find an equitable means of rotation between the parties. It therefore suggested that the annual Convention Sermon be entirely omitted. After some deliberation, the ministers tabled this report. From 1830 through 1836, the orthodox party, by employing its voting power in the selection of Convention Preachers, kept up the attack on the liberals; then, in 1837, Henry Ware, Jr., a candidate agreeable to both sides, assumed the duties of Convention Preacher. A large number of laymen, liberal both in theology and financial attitude, came to hear Ware preach, with the result that the annual collection far exceeded the usual amount. At this point, both parties agreed to a cessation of hostilities; thus did an appreciation of economics promote the resolution of a difficult problem. After 1837, orthodox and liberal preachers alternated in the Convention pulpit (the orthodox preaching two years and then the liberals one year), carefully confining themselves to topics not calculated to stir up denominational tempers. Since that time, both groups have continued to cooperate for the good of the ministerium's interests.

The simple fact that it [the Convention] is the only surviving testimony to the Catholicity of Congregationalism, having outlived the controversies of Calvinist and Arminian, Trinitarian and Unitarian, and that it still unites the Congregational [-Unitarian] ministers of Massachusetts by the beautiful bond of charity . . . , is enough to make it deserving of a memorial that shall hand it down to our children's children.<sup>38</sup>

The Convention, during those years in which it was passing out of the arena of theological controversy and even down to the present day, has continued to concern itself with matters of current and lasting interest. In 1816, the ministers published their findings with respect to the problem of "war;" in the following years, they recorded their opinions on such matters as privateering, profanation of the Sabbath, intemperance, and upon the feasibility of providing religious instruction for children employed by factories. In 1849, the Convention published a scholarly study and condemnation of the institution of slavery, adopting a "gradualist" position in regard to the means which might be employed to end the practice.

By 1870, the Convention's existence was threatened yet once again, this time by the apathy of its members. A committee, appointed by the Convention to consider the question of "improving or dissolving" the ministerium, in 1872 urged that the Convention be not abandoned. In the meetings of 1875 and 1876, the issue was pursued by those who would have dissolved the gathering once and for all; on both occasions, the question was postponed. Then, in 1887, John W. Harding's "Historical Sermon" was printed and widely distributed, sparking a new interest in the traditions and pur-



poses of the venerable body. Shortly thereafter, Edward Everett Hale appeared on the scene to champion the cause of the Convention. Speaking before the Congregational Club in 1890, Hale proposed remedies for the weaknesses of the ministerium; although the remedies (chiefly the extension of membership to the laity and to representatives of other denominations) were never applied, Hale's concern was so contagious that, from his time to the present day, there has never again been any thought of dissolving the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers.

Looking back over the Convention's history, we marvel at the tenacity with which it has held to its corporate life and purpose, in the face of both controversy and apathy. Overcoming bitter differences of opinion regarding revival practices in the 1740's, riding out the storm of the Congregational-Unitarian schism of the early 1800's and defeating the very real threat of dissolution in the 1870's and 1880's, this ministerium has continued upon its way, keeping to the high-minded ideals which its founders espoused. Never having been blessed with the at-best-ambiguous heritage of a formal "constitution," the Convention has faithfully and realistically reviewed and reformed its "rules of procedure" as necessity and foresight have dictated; yet, never have such changes been worked as would have done violence to the congregational principles which are the core of the Convention's being. Today, there should be no barrier to the continued existence and increased usefulness of this, perhaps the oldest of all extant American ministeria (certainly the oldest of its kind).<sup>39</sup>

In order that such a useful continuation may be doubly assured, we respectfully submit four recommendations to the Convention for its further consideration:

First, that a concentrated effort be made to assemble all of the available reliquiae of the Convention, placing what is gathered in a single, denominationally neutral repository, where students of New England's ecclesiastical history may have easy access to this important material;

Second, that such officials or committees as may be thought proper review the historical development of the "rules" of the Convention, to the end that an approved edition may be placed in the hands of all Convention members;

Third, that the attention of denominational journals and the secular press alike be called to the existence and activities of the Convention, so that it may not become "a light hid under a bushel;"

Fourth, that the Convention return to its ancient custom of presenting its annual addresses to the general public, especially inviting the attendance of theological students in the Commonwealth.

In 1941, during the course of an address delivered before the Boston Association of Ministers, a recent historian of the Convention, Dr. Christopher Rhodes Eliot, expressed his hope that "perhaps a new generation may rediscover the Convention and build a new body for its Immortal Soul."<sup>40</sup> The intervening years have witnessed at least the partial realization of Dr. Eliot's wish. May not today's gathering be one rededicated to those vital principles of usefulness and fellowship which give this Convention its enduring and dynamic continuity?

## FOOTNOTES

1. The essay and bibliography, together with their footnotes, contain a complete descriptive listing of all the literary remains of the Convention known to the present writer. Certain references, made in these footnotes, are not repeated in the bibliography because of their secondary nature.

The Convention sermons and addresses present a further problem: of the nearly three hundred such sermons and addresses known or assumed to have been made before this ministerium, only seventy were actually printed (despite the fact that nearly every sermon or address given prior to 1900 was voted the *right* to be printed). Three more survive in manuscript form, and the present writer has heard and taken notes on another three. These seventy-six sermons are described in the bibliography. The extremely sparse information on the non-extant sermons is given in full.

2. *Winthrop's Journal* (edited by Hosmer). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908. Vol. I, pp. 112-113.

3. Thus Cotton Mather: "In the Beginning of the Country, the Ministers had their frequent *Meetings*, which were most usually after their Publick and Weekly or Monthly *Lectures*, wherein they consulted for the Welfare of their churches . . . ." *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London, 1702). Book III, p. 6.

4. Thus we find Increase Mather using the terms "synod" and "council" interchangeably (cf. his *Disquisition Concerning Ecclesiastical Councils*, published in Boston in 1716). The Congregational historian, Williston Walker, distinguishes a "synod" from a "ministerial convention" by holding that the latter does not include "representatives of the brethren of the churches" (cf. his *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, published in 1893 by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York, p. 138).

5. *An Historical Sketch of the Convention* . . . (Cambridge: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1821) cautiously notes: "The silence of the early historians on this subject, especially of Winthrop and Hubbard, is presumptive evidence, that there was no Convention before the year 1680" (p. 3). Walker, in his *Creeds and Platforms* (cf. above), holds that the Convention, "in germ at least," antedates local ministerial associations (p. 467). A year later, in another book, Walker makes a bolder assertion: "The first public manifestation of the movement was in the Ministerial Convention of Massachusetts, — an annual gathering of all the ministers of the province at the time of the May General Court, which had begun in the informal coming together of the ministers in the earliest days of the colony, and had crystallized sufficiently by about 1680 to have a moderator, a dinner, and a sermon" (cf. his *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, published in 1894 by The Christian Literature Company of New York, p. 201).

This essay takes no issue with the guarded statement made in the *Historical Sketch*; moreover, realizing the difficulty of determining where the prototype of Convention would end and the Convention itself begin, we do not quarrel with Walker's earlier remark. However, there is good warrant for rejecting the statement which Walker makes in his *History* (cf. the essay).

6. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia*, Book V, p. 58.

7. Cotton Mather, *Diary* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1911), Vol. I, p. 302. Mather himself was ordained in 1685.

8. Cotton Mather, *Ratio Disciplinae Nov-Anglorum* (Boston, 1726), pp. 176-177.

9. Mather, in the passage cited from the *Ratio*, remarks that the Convention is held "at the time of the *Anniversary Solemnity*, when the *General Assembly* meets, on

the last *Wednesday* in the month of *May*." However, from 1632 to 1686, Election Day was held on the second (not the last) Wednesday in May (cf. Courtland F. Bishop's *History of Elections in the American Colonies*, published in New York in 1893, p. 102). From 1686 to 1692, Massachusetts, having forfeited her charter, had no such elections. The charter of 1691 (enforced in 1692) provided that elections should be held on the last Wednesday in May (cf. Thomas Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts*, published in Salem in 1795, Vol. II, p. 15).

10. John Pierce's personal copy of the 1821 *Historical Sketch* (cf. fn. 5), now owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, has the following note penned in its margins: "According to Dr. [Joseph] Sewall's journal, it was voted 26 May, 1720, a sermon should be preached annually to the ministers on the day following the Election. Accordingly Dr. Increase Mather was chosen first preacher; Rev. Solomon Stoddard second; & Dr. Cotton Mather third. 1721. Increase Mather, D. D. Boston Rev. I. 20. The first regular sermon. J. P." Inasmuch as Joseph Sewall's journal was destroyed by fire some years ago, it is fortunate that we have Pierce's notation. Some fragments of the Sewall journal also appear in Hamilton Andrews Hill's *History of the Old South Church (Third Church), Boston, 1669-1884*, published in two volumes in Boston in 1890.

More will be said with respect to the problem of identifying the early Convention Preachers in the Bibliography; however, we may remark that there is no evidence that Stoddard, who died in 1729, ever received another opportunity to address the Convention. One may be sure that if Stoddard were elected second preacher to a Mather's first, nothing short of death itself would have prevented that Mather's appearance.

11. The Convention Sermon of Eliphalet Porter (*The Simplicity That Is In Christ*, published in Boston in 1810) contains the first published list of Convention Preachers and is, we suspect, responsible for the notion that John Sherman and Cotton Mather were the Convention Preachers for the years 1682 and 1689 respectively.

Mather's 1689 sermon, as the content shows, was given before quite another body than a "convention of ministers." Sherman may well have preached to a group of clergymen in 1682 (a not uncommon happening), but, for reasons already stated, we cannot believe that the Convention itself existed at that time. John Pierce (cf. fn. 10) noted in his personal copy of the 1821 *Historical Sketch*: "This must have been preached on some special occasion," and thereupon crossed out Sherman's name.

12. This passage, generally thought to have been written by Governor Sullivan, is to be found in the brief appendix to Peter Thacher's sermon preached before the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, and published in Boston in the year of its delivery, 1795.

13. Cf. fn. 9.

14. Mather provides the information relating to his being Moderator in his *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 537. Pierce's notations are the authority for dating the first Convention Sermon in 1721 (cf. fn. 10).

15. Cf. Susan M. Reed, *Church and State in Massachusetts: 1691-1740* published by the University of Illinois in 1914, pp. 28-30.

16. The original document (cf. bibliography) is held by the Archives Department at the Massachusetts State House in Boston. Notations on this document (dated June 11, 1695) show that the substance of the ministers' initial appeal was made law at that time.

Our only clue as to what transpired at the 1696 meeting of the Convention comes from the records of the First Church in Dorchester. On June 5, 1696, the members of that church voted "To Comply with the Advice of ye Assembly of ye Generallty of ye Ministers mett at ye late Anniversary of ye Election & ye day aftr it, To See to it yt ye Intervalls of Publick Exercises at Noons on ye Lords days be not profaned but well Improved in Prayr readings repeatings &c, by Such as Stay in ye

Meetinghouse" (*Records of the First Church at Dorchester in New England: 1636-1784* [Boston, 1891], pp. 111-112).

17. Cf. Increase Mather, *The Order of the Gospel Professed and Practiced by the Churches of Christ in New-England . . .*, published in Boston in 1700. The following excerpts testify to this early Convention activity:

"No longer since then May 27 1697, no less then thirty Ministers of this Province, did disclose and subscribe it with their hands, *that they were made sensible of the tendencies which there are amongst us toward Deviations from the good Order wherein our Churches have according to the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, been happily established and continued*" (pp. 8-9).

"*Has the Church Covenant as Commonly practised in the Churches of New-England, any Scripture Foundation?* Answ. This Question was considered at a General Convention of Ministers at Boston, May 26, 1698. And all the Ministers then present (one only accepted [i. e., excepted]) did concur in the Affirmative" (p. 89). Walker, in *Creeds and Platforms* (cf. above), suggests that the single dissenting vote may well have been cast by Solomon Stoddard (p. 468).

18. Cf. Mather, *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 302, 352.

19. Increase Mather, *Disquisition* (cf. fn. 4), p. 38; reprinted in *Congregational Quarterly*, XII, pp. 365-366. Cf. also Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, pp. 479-480.

20. Cf. Samuel Sewall, *Diary*, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Ser. V, Vol. VI, p. 35.

21. Mather, *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 429-430. *A Seasonable Testimony* was published in Boston in 1702.

22. Mather, *Ratio* (cf. fn. 8), pp. 178-179, wherein the signatures to the letter are omitted. The signatures are given in two reprintings of the letter: *Panoplist*, X, pp. 320-321, and Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, pp. 483-484. Cf. also Walker, *History* (cf. fn. 5), pp. 201-204.

23. Cf. Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, p. 485. Note that the same individual, Samuel Willard, was at this time the moderator of both the Convention and of the Cambridge Association.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 486.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 485-486.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 486.

27. Cf. Christopher Rhodes Eliot, "The Origin and Early History of the Boston Association of Ministers," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. VII, i (1940), pp. 32ff.

28. Cf. Samuel Sewall, *Diary* (cf. fn. 20), pp. 182, 312, 385-386. Hill (cf. fn. 10) quotes from Joseph Sewall's journal as follows: "May 28. Att the Ministers' Meeting Dr. Increase Mather open'd the Meeting with pray'r. Question - How may a Minister best deport and behave himself: suppose the Church-Interest should prevail amongst us? Answer: Let Him be well studied in the point of Non-Conformity. 2. Take care of his life and Conversation &c. Dr. Cotton Mather concluded with pray'r. The Ministers din'd at the Exchange Tavern" (I, p. 362).

29. *An Historical Sketch* (cf. fn. 5), pp. 15-16.

30. On three occasions this practice was allowed to lapse for one year. In 1752 and 1764, outbreaks of smallpox in Boston caused the ministers to cancel the meeting of the Convention for those years. In 1865 the Sermon was omitted, when a Fast Day was proclaimed because of the death of President Abraham Lincoln.

31. The Harvard College copy of Cotton Mather's 1722 Convention Sermon (cf. bibliography) contains handwritten notations which assign Colman's sermon to 1728 rather than 1729. The various printed lists of Convention Preachers, which may



very well antedate these handwritten notations, are agreed, however, that the Preacher in 1728 was John Williams.

32. For all references in this essay to the Convention Sermons, consult the bibliography, in which is given full information on each extant Sermon.

33. "J. F.," *Remarks on the Reverend Mr. Joshua Gee's Letter . . .*, published in Boston in 1744, p. 7.

34. The official Minutes of the Convention, from which the information for this section of the essay is drawn, are contained in five volumes, currently held by the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. These five volumes cover the years 1748-1928, inclusive; a sixth volume, covering the years 1929-1947, inclusive, has been lost for the past decade, and it is unlikely that it will be recovered.

This lacuna in the more recent records is partly filled by Christopher Rhodes Eliot's "History of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers from 1887 to 1941," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. VIII, Part I (1947). The present writer earnestly solicits all available information concerning the activities of the Convention during the years 1941-1947, inclusive.

35. John W. Harding, *Historical Sermon . . .*, published in Boston in 1888, pp. 7-8.

36. Since the early 1900's, this fund has been administered by the American Unitarian Association.

37. The Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society still functions actively today, although its rules with respect to the beneficiaries of its own funds differ slightly from the rules governing the disposition of funds which it holds for the Convention. The papers of the Society are held by the Congregational Library, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

In recent years, the Convention's annual collection has been disbursed by the officers and directors of the ministerium, at their discretion (voted in 1950).

38. Harding, *Historical Sermon* (cf. fn. 35), p. 3.

39. The generally accepted date for the constitutional beginning of the Boston-Charlestown Association is 1690, which would place that Association's formation at least two years prior to the formal organization of the Convention. It is quite probable, however, that the prototype of the Convention antedates this or any other Association.

40. Manuscript copies of this address, "The Boston Association and the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, 1865-1900," are held by the Congregational Library and by the Historical Library of the American Unitarian Association.

## OFFICERS OF THE CONVENTION

### Treasurers:

Joseph Sewall  
 Ebenezer Pemberton  
 Andrew Eliot  
 William Gordon  
 Simeon Howard  
 Oliver Everett  
 Joseph Eckley  
 John Eliot  
 William E. Channing, 1813-1814  
 Charles Lowell, 1814-1818

Francis Parkman, 1818-1825  
 Nathaniel Frothingham, 1825-1832  
 Alexander Young, 1832-1833  
 George Ripley, 1833-1839  
 Samuel Lothrop, 1839-1867  
 Rufus Ellis, 1867-1879  
 Henry Jenks, 1879-1905  
 Benjamin Bulkeley, 1905-1927  
 Henry Wilder Foote, 1927-1952  
 Bradford Gale, 1952-

### Scribes:

Mather Byles, 1748-1755  
 Jonathan Mayhew, 1755-1757  
 Samuel Cooper, 1757-1758  
 Andrew Eliot, 1758-1761  
 Samuel Mather, 1761-1762  
 Ebenezer Bridge, 1762-1763  
 Ebenezer Parkman, 1763-1766  
 Amos Adams, 1766-1776  
 Jacob Cushing, 1776-1779  
 John Lathrop, 1779-1787  
 John Clarke, 1787-1792  
 John Bradford, 1792-1794  
 Jedidiah Morse, 1794-1800  
 John Kirkland, 1800-1810  
 John Pierce, 1810-1820  
 John Codman, 1820-1830  
 Benjamin Wisner, 1830-1833  
 George Blagdon, 1833-1839  
 N. Adams, 1839-1848  
 A. C. Thompson, 1848-1854  
 S. M. Worcester, 1854-1855  
 George Richards, 1855-1860

James Means, 1860-1868  
 Alonzo Quint, 1868-1870  
 A. McKenzie, 1870-1871  
 J. F. Moors, 1871-1874  
 S. E. Herrick, 1874-1876  
 L. J. Livermore, 1876-1878  
 H. A. Hazen, 1878-1880  
 E. N. Packard, 1880-1887  
 B. F. Hamilton, 1887-1910  
 W. E. Strong, 1910-1925  
 Seeley Tomkins, 1925-1926  
 Vaughan Dabney, 1926-1928  
 Edward Morris, 1928-1932  
 Daniel Bliss, 1932-1935  
 Manley Albright, 1935-1944  
 Alfred Bliss, 1944-1948  
 Silas Anthony, 1948-1949  
 Claude Bond, 1949-1952  
 Ralph E. Bayes, 1952-1954  
 Addison E. Steeves, 1954-1956  
 Richard D. Pierce, 1956-

### Moderators and Presidents:

Under the early rules of the Convention, the Preacher for any given year acted as Moderator at that year's meeting (there were occasional exceptions to this rule). In more recent times, separate Moderators have been elected, the title being changed to "President" at some point during the unrecorded years 1941-1947.

Herbert Hitchen, Moderator, 1937  
 Austin Rice, Moderator, 1938  
 Augustus P. Reccord, Moderator, 1939

John H. Leamon, President, 1948-1949  
 Roy B. Wintersteen, President, 1950-1951  
 Hubert Stem, President, 1952  
 Duncan Howlett, President, 1953-1954  
 Frederick M. Meek, President, 1955-1956  
 Dana M. Greeley, President, 1956-

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE CONVENTION

This bibliography lists all known extant copies of Convention reliquiae, describing them by full title, author (where any), place and date of publication, and location of copies. Descriptions of the content of extant items is also given, to provide more extensive information on this topic than has heretofore been made available in a single list.

The locations of copies are designated by the following abbreviations:

- AAS — American Antiquarian Society.
- AC — Amherst College Library.
- AN — Andover Newton Theological School Library.
- AUA — American Unitarian Association, Boston. The starred items (\*) are kept in a tin box in the AUA vault; other items are in the AUA Historical Library.
- BA — Boston Athenaeum.
- BPL — Boston Public Library.
- CON — Congregational Library, Boston.
- EI — Essex Institute, Salem.
- HC — Harvard College Library (Houghton).
- HDS — Harvard Divinity School (Andover Harvard Theological Library).
- MHS — Massachusetts Historical Society.
- MSHA — Massachusetts State House, Archives.
- WC — Williams College Library.
- YU — Yale University Library.

The staffs of these institutions have been most helpful to the present writer in the matter of expediting his research.

The present writer would be pleased to receive further information from any reader, either by way of correction or addition to this bibliography.

## OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE CONVENTION

Minutes of the Meetings of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers. Vol. I: 1748-1789; Vol. II: 1789-1815; Vol. III: 1816-1838; Vol. IV: 1839-1879; Vol. V: 1880-1928. AUA\*

A sixth volume of the Minutes (1929-1946/1947) was lost *circa* 1947. The Minutes for meetings held in and after 1948 are in the care of the present Scribe of the Convention.

Accounts Books of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers. Three non-concurrent volumes covering the years 1839-1903, 1860-1881, and 1872-1904, respectively. AUA\*

The current Account Book is in the care of the present Treasurer of the Convention.

Receipt Book of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, covering the years 1895-1909. AUA\*

# CONVENTION SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

[Footnotes for this Section begin on page 93 – Ed.]

<i>Year</i>	<i>Preacher</i>	<i>Text</i>
1682	X <sup>1</sup>	
1689	X <sup>2</sup>	
1721	Increase Mather, Boston <sup>3</sup>	REV. 1:20
1722	Cotton Mather, Boston <sup>4</sup>	REV. 2:19
	<p>"The Services of An Useful Ministry." Mather stresses the minister's homiletical responsibilities, minimizing the importance of pastoral calling. Origen and Calvin are his models of "serviceable men." A contemporary book which has accused the Presbyterian clergy of aping Anglican preachers receives Mather's scornful criticism. Reference is made to an attempt on Mather's life in connection with his support of inoculation experiments. BA, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.</p>	
1723	Nehemiah Walter, Roxbury	I TIM. 1:12
	<p>"Faithfulness in the Ministry, Derived from Christ." The basic thesis of Walter's sermon is that "the Son of God Incarnate, in the discharge of His Mediatory Office, is then the helper of His Ministers" (p. 6). Diligent study and a high level of homiletical achievement are the ideals held up before the clergy. AAS, BA, CON, HDS, MHS.</p>	
1724	Peter Thacher, Milton <sup>5</sup>	PHIL. 1:21
	<p>Although this manuscript is untitled, Thacher employs the phrase "the Evangelical Minister" so often that it will serve to describe his topic. Ministers of Jesus Christ, as differentiated from other ministers, employ special methods in their work, preach a unique message, and win for themselves a peculiar reward (for death is the faithful minister's gain). Note is taken of the deaths of several Convention members, chief among them being Increase Mather. MHS (ms.).</p>	
1725	X <sup>6</sup>	
1726	William Williams, Hatfield	COL. 4:11
	<p>"The Great Duty of Ministers to Advance the Kingdom of God and to Comfort Their Fellow-helpers in this Work." The preacher begins by contrasting the kingdoms of this earth to the Kingdom of God which "in no ways interferes with the rights of the Kings of Earth, but more than anything serves to make them sit easy upon their thrones" (p. 2). The clergy are reminded that their primary interest should be the advancement of the celestial Kingdom, and that in this work they should seek counsel and comfort from one another. Williams' concluding prayer asks that the "Schools of Learning which are Seminaries without which the Churches of Christ fall into decay, may have the smiles of Heaven upon them . . . ." AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS, YU.</p>	
1727	[Benjamin Wadsworth, Pres. of Harvard	MAL. 2:7] <sup>7</sup>
1728	John Williams, Deerfield	

1729	Benjamin Colman, Boston	II THESS. 3:18
1730	X <sup>9</sup>	
1731	X <sup>10</sup>	
1732	Benjamin Colman, Boston	REV. 2:1
1733	[Peter Thacher	II COR. 1:12] <sup>11</sup>
1734	Joseph Sewall, Boston	LUKE 24:49 <sup>12</sup>
1735	John Hancock	ROM. 1:1 <sup>13</sup>
1736	Benjamin Colman, Boston	I CHRON. 29:14 <sup>14</sup>
1737	[Joseph Baxter, Medfield	HEB. 13:16]
1738	John Barnard, Marblehead	COL. 1:18

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only, and Supreme Head of the Church." Stressing the covenant relationship as being the constituting principle of the [particular] church, Barnard says that "... no Person, whether civil, or ecclesiastical, has any Right to impose either Officers, or Members, upon this, or that, particular Church, or to divest them of any of them, without their own Consent; or has Right to controul them, in any of their Actions, propose to them as a Church; but they must be left to govern themselves, and direct all their Actions, as a Church, according to the best of their understanding of the Mind of their Master, their safest Rule, and to whom they must be finally accountable . . ." (pp. 11-12). Barnard goes on to criticize Roman Catholicism, certain implications of the Cambridge Platform, and the current predilection of clergymen for the study of philosophy. AAS, BA, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1739	Nathanael Eells, Scituate	I SAM. 4:13
1740	Thomas Prince, Boston	Is. 9:7

"The Endless Increase of Christ's Government," which may be found in *Six Sermons by the Late Thomas Prince . . . published from his Manuscripts by John Erskine, D. D. one of the Ministers of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1785). The present form of the sermon is a revision which Prince preached at a public lecture in 1756. Prince holds that for several "ages," Christ has been "removing the light and grace of his kingdom from the eastern parts of the earth; so, like the apparent course of the sun, he comes on and rises in the eastern regions . . ." (p.27). BA.

1741	Edward Holyoke, Pres. of Harvard	MATT. 16:6
<p>"The Duty of Ministers of the Gospel to guard against the Pharisaism and Sadducism, of the Present Day." The clergy are called to weed out of their parishes all traces of Arminianism, Antinomianism, Arianism, and Socinianism. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.</p>		

1742	Israel Loring, Sudbury	II COR. 2:16
<p>"Ministers insufficient of themselves rightly to discharge the Duties of their Sacred Calling." Loring describes the duties of the pastor as being preaching, prayer, the defense of the truth (i. e., the Gospel), governing the flock, pastoral visitation, instruction of the ignorant and of the young, maintenance of communion with other churches, all in addition to leading a perfectly blameless life. He also criticizes "lay exhorting." This is the first Convention Sermon to make a candid appeal for a generous offering. AAS, BPL, CON.</p>		



1743 Nathaniel Appleton, Cambridge

MATT. 5:13-14

"Faithful Ministers of Christ, the Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World." Appleton advises a middle-of-the-road attitude toward the question of whether or not to employ revival techniques. Having little good to say for "lay exhorting," he nonetheless feels that ministers should find some means of awakening and stimulating the hearts of their parishioners. Finally, he decries the growth of "deism" and "infidelity." AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1744 Charles Chauncy, Boston

TIT. 2:15

"Ministers cautioned against the Occasions of Contempt." Chauncy expresses concern that "the *Body of the Ministers* were never so treated with more Insult and Contempt than by Multitudes, and of those too, who once esteemed them the Glory of New-England . . ." (p. 12). This, he feels, has been brought to pass through the carelessness of the clergy in their attitudes toward public worship. "In fine, Ministers should not be wanting in a Care about the *external Manner* of their preaching. This indeed is a Matter of the least Importance; though, perhaps, most recommending to the Generality of People: For which Reason, it would not be mispent Labour, if Ministers took some Pains that they might be Masters of a *good Pronunciation*, and *becoming Gesture*: To be sure, they should avoid disagreeable *Tones* and *Whines*; as either unnatural *Distortions of Countenance*, and *Motions of the Body*: Neither should they turn *Mimicks*, endeavoring to *speak* and *act*, not like themselves, but those they admire . . ." (p. 35). Chauncy leaves no doubt as to his own anti-revivalistic sentiments. BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1745 Peter Clark, Salem Village

ROM. 3:1-2

"The Advantages and Obligations arising from the Oracles of God committed to the Church and its Ministry." Inasmuch as "Gospel-Ministers" are the true successors of the Aaronic priesthood (only, however, in the sense of being teachers), they should understand and defend the importance, clarity, infallibility, and authority of Scripture. The light of nature is insufficient to guide men; only God's oracles can promote true piety. Thus, even civil magistrates should encourage knowledge of the Bible. Clark warns against the deist, the anti-scripturalist, the papist, the enthusiast, and the itinerant (i. e., unlearned) minister. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1746 Ebenezer Gay, Hingham

JOHN 1:32

"The True Spirit of a Gospel-Minister represented, and urged." Insisting that a "dove-like spirit" is needful to all clergymen and laymen, Gay laments the unhappy results of the controversy over revival methods. "But disagreeing in Opinion concerning some Appearances of Religion, and Methods of promoting it, we grew strange to one another, left off associating together as before, and shunn'd a Communication of ministerial Labours . . ." (p. 28). Irenic throughout the Sermon, Gay nonetheless does not hesitate to express his own convictions: "Sinners are won to Christ, and their Duty, by the sweet Invitations and Arguments of divine Grace; not driven with the boisterous Wind of human Passion" (p. 16). Gay also urges that candidates for the ministry should obtain a proper seminary education. AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

1747 X<sup>15</sup>

1748 Edward Wigglesworth, Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard.<sup>16</sup>

1749 John Barnard, Andover

II COR. 4:1

1750 William Welsted, Boston<sup>17</sup>

I TIM. 4:6

"A Good Minister of Jesus Christ."

1751 Samuel Wigglesworth, Ipswich<sup>18</sup>

II COR. 11:2

1752 Smallpox in Boston — Convention cancelled.

1753 Samuel Phillips, Andover

ACTS 10:36

"Preaching Peace by Jesus Christ describ'd and urg'd, as the principal Design of the Gospel-Ministry." Critical of Arminianism and Antinomianism, Phillips comes out with equal vigor against the tenets of "natural religion": "If there be any who teach, that a *bare rational Conviction is sufficient* in order to render Persons *altogether Christians*, they are under a gross Mistake . . ." (p. 26). The old doctrines must be reaffirmed, viz.: the fall, natural depravity, "Gospel grace," God's absolute sovereignty, and election. Viewing the fishing trade and the linen industry as vocations well suited to the purpose of keeping the lower classes out of mischief, Phillips reveals contemporary unrest and hints at rumors of war. Harding in his 1887 *Historical Sermon*, notes: "It was the son of this divine who furnished supplies of powder for the army of Washington" (p. 19). AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1754 Stephen Williams, Springfield<sup>19</sup>

EX. 25:8

1755 Joseph Parsons, Bradford

MATT. 5:14-16

1756 Hull Abbot, Charlestown

1757 William Rand, Kingstown

I THESS. 2:4

"Gospel-Ministers should be chiefly concerned to please God, and not Men, in the discharge of their Office." The title of Rand's brief and rather unworldly sermon fully describes its contents. AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

1758 Jonathan Townsend, Needham

III JOHN 8

"Ministers, and other Christians exhorted to be Fellow-helpers to the Truth." While holding to the form of a *concto ad clerum* in his Sermon, Townsend nonetheless manages to call a number of points to the attention of the laity, viz.: that the laity should never invade or assume the priestly office, that they should pray for the members of the clergy, that the laity should lead virtuous lives and publicly encourage the clergy, that they should train their households in the knowledge and fear of God, that they should be faithful in attending public worship, and that they should support collections taken up either for missionary labors or for the publication of Christian tracts. AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

1759 Ebenezer Pemberton, Boston

ROM. 11:13

1760 William Balch, Bradford

II COR. 1:12

"Simplicity and godly Sincerity, in a Christian Minister, the sure Way to Happiness." In pleading that human systems of theology be laid aside and replaced by the Gospel, Balch lays a strong emphasis on the guiding role that must be played by conscience. A truly sincere minister need have no fear of God's judgement. AAS, BA, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1761 Ebenezer Parkman, Westborough

II COR. 5:14

"The Love of Christ Constraining Us." Stressing the arduousness of clerical duties, Parkman warns against the many temptations that ever beset the pastor. However, the love of Christ is the minister's guiding principle, so that he will suffer all tribulations willingly. In speaking of "*Public Judgements and public Mercies*," Parkman notes: "Among the latter I can't but mention the remarkable Success of our Arms — but especially the happy Accession of his most sacred Majesty, King GEORGE the III<sup>d</sup>. to the *British* throne. — These and other Tokens of the divine Favour are to constrain us to be the more diligent, active, faithful and chearful in His Service" (p. 33). AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

"Of the Pastoral Care." Mather charges the minister with a multiplicity of duties, not the least important being the careful study of "the Episcopal Office and the Duties thereof" (p. 18). The cleric must do battle against error, ignorance, innovation, moral evil, worldliness (chiefly profanity and sensuality), doing all in his power to promote the growth of godliness. Of the New England churches, Mather remarks: "We must acknowledge, with Thankfulness to the glorious *Head of the Church* and Lord of the World, and at the same Time with due Honour to the *Government* over us, that these our Fathers have shewed *their Care* of these churches by *enacting good Laws* for *their Enjoyment of their Privileges and Freedoms* respecting Divine Worship, Church Order and Discipline, and for *their Encouragement in the peaceable and regular Profession and Practice* thereof; *which Laws*, having received the Royal Sanction, *render our Churches* as much as they can be *the established Churches* of this Province. — And besides, they have manifested *their Care of our Churches* by their Laws passed from Time to Time in favour of *Schools and Colleges*, and of a *learned*, as well as *orthodox, Ministry*. And as we bless GOD for the *good Effects* of these wholesome Laws in Times past, and even of late; we cannot but hope, that our *Fathers in the Civil State* will still *take Care*, that *these Laws shall not be defeated, or evaded*; but be duly executed according to the real Spirit, Intent and Meaning of them: For *They* will thus continue to *Shew such a Care* of these Churches of the Redeemer as will be grateful to Him, and honorary to themselves also" (p. 28). Mather concludes with an appeal for continued subscription to a fund being raised to finance the propagation of the Gospel among the Indians. BA, CON, HC, HDS.

1763 John Lowell, Newburyport

II COR. 7:2

1764 Smallpox in Boston — Convention cancelled.

1765 Charles Chauncy, Boston

ACTS 8:5

1766 Thomas Prentice, Charlestown

I COR. 14:1

1767 Andrew Eliot, Boston

JAS. 5:19-20

1768 John Tucker, Newbury

COL. 4:11

"Ministers considered as Fellow-workers, who should be Comforters to each other, in the Kingdom of God." Tucker states his concept of the limits of the realm of pastoral duties: "Our business is in the study, — in the pulpit, and in the friendly and pastoral visits among our people, for their assistance in the ways of God, not in the shop, in the warehouse, or in the field" (p. 24). AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

1769 Samuel Dunbar, Stoughton

GAL. 1:8-9

1770 Samuel Cooper, Boston

REV. 12:1

1771 Robert Breck, Springfield

HEB. 13:1

1772 Samuel Locke, Pres. of Harvard

II COR. 4:2

"A Sermon Preached . . ." Locke begins his Sermon with a rhapsodic contemplation of the nature and necessity of truth, dividing truth into four compartments: abstract, logical, ethical, and revealed. He follows this with an extensive consideration of the peculiar nature of the Bible, hinting at possible levels of validity with respect to revelation (p. 22), and concludes that Scripture was meant by God to be better understood by each successive generation of men. Opposed to deism, "skepticism and atheism" (among which he does not carefully discriminate), Locke makes an eloquent

appeal for the use of the proper methods of defending truth: "... such is the nature and genius of Christianity, that the proper method of defending and propagating it, is not by silencing objections, with fines and censures; and crowding down creeds and confessions, upon pain of eternal punishments; and requiring an implicit submission to the authority of the church, or of synods; but by understanding the truth, asserting it, and offering the proper evidences which support it . . ." (p. 34). AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS.

1773 Edward Barnard, Haverhill JOHN 4:36-38

"A Sermon Preached . . ." Barnard presents the Jewish dispensation as God's chosen manner of introducing Christianity, the several stages of development having been the family (typified by Abram), church-state relationships (illustrated by Moses), and moral awareness (evidenced by the prophets). Detailing the difficulties which attend pastoral labors, Barnard assures the ministers of the state of future blessedness which they will one day enjoy. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1774 James Chandler, Rowley II TIM. 4:7-8

1775<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Stevens, Kittery MATT. 24:45-46

1776 Samuel Cooke, Cambridge I THESS. 2:4

1777 Samuel Langdon, Pres. of Harvard GAL. 1:11-12

1778 Isaac Morrill, Wilmington DAN. 12:3

1779 Samuel Webster, Salisbury MATT. 7:28-29

1780 Ebenezer Bridge, Chelmsford

1781 John Mellen, Hanover I COR. 1:23

Printed as *The Doctrine of the Cross of Christ* by Nathaniel Coverly of Plymouth in 1785, the year in which Mellen preached it a second time (at the ordination of Levi Whitman). Mellen's primary purpose in this Sermon is to restate the themes of God's boundless love for man, the magnitude of evil, the miserable condition of sinners, and the free grace of God. Challenging his listeners to adopt a spirit of humility, Mellen calls upon all men to remain true to their station and calling. AAS, HC.

1782 Thaddeus Maccarty, Worcester

1783 Daniel Shute, Hingham

1784 Joseph Willard, Pres. of Harvard

1785 Phillips Payson, Chelsea

1786 Moses Hemmenway, Wells

1787 Gad Hitchcock, Pembroke

1788 Nathan Fiske, Brookfield PHIL. 1:23-24

"Selflove and Benevolence; and the Needfulness of the Christian Ministry," printed as Sermon X in Fiske's *Twenty Two Sermons on Various and Important Subjects; Chiefly Practical*, published by Isaiah Thomas of Worcester in 1794. Stressing the "unbounded philanthropy of the Son of God," Fiske holds the "*selflove* and *benevolence*, like *cohesion* and *gravitation*, are principles established by the all-wise and beneficent Creator, for the preservation of harmony, and the attainment of the greatest good" (p. 174). AAS, MHS.

- 1789 Jacob Cushing, Waltham ACTS 2:42
- 1790 Simeon Howard, Boston
- 1791 Jason Haven, Dedham
- 1792 Josiah Bridge, Sudbury I THESS. 2:4
- 1793 Thomas Barnard, Salem ECCL. 3:1
- "A Sermon Delivered . . ." "The Subject shall be, The Ministers of Religion, considered as Members of Civil Society in this State; particularly, as assembled at this time for the purpose of such reflections, as are intimately connected with their character, usefulness, and interest" (p. 7). In favoring the disestablishment of the Massachusetts churches, Barnard predicts: "The time is hastening, when all unnatural mixtures of civil and religious power will be taken away; when the Magistrate will have the sole charge of the bodies, liberties, and estates of his subjects; and the Ministers of Religion will be confined to their improvement in piety and virtue, and preparation for the eternal world beyond the grave. The order itself, however, which takes its rise from the nature of man, will remain whilst man remains. And though stripped of all foreign ornaments and powers, with which it has been sometimes unnaturally clothed, will yet have a degree of respectability, which will secure it the attention and favours of the civil government" (pp. 10-11). AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.
- 1794 Chandler Robbins, Plymouth ACTS 20:26
- "A Sermon Preached . . ." Robbins spells out the full system of New Divinity theology, insisting that the minister must preach the whole system if he wishes to be sure that he is "pure from the blood of all men." Jedidiah Morse, the Convention's Scribe for 1794, notes in the Convention Minutes that this was "a pathetic and well-adopted sermon." AAS, BPL, CON, HC, MHS, YU.
- 1795 Henry Cummings, Billerica ROM. 11:13
- 1796 Jeremy Belknap, Boston II TIM. 1:8
- "A Sermon Delivered . . ." After dealing at length with the afflictions which must be borne by members of the clergy, Belknap adds: "Another of the afflictions to which we are exposed, is the resentment of pretended patriots, when we oppose their views in endeavoring to serve our country. There is a monopolizing spirit in some politicians, which would exclude clergymen from all attention to matters of state and government; which would prohibit us from bringing political subjects into the pulpit, and even threaten us with the loss of our livings if we move at all in the political sphere. But, my brethren, I consider politics as intimately connected with morality, and both with religion. If it be the duty of gospel ministers to preach morality, it is their duty to preach it to public as well as to private man" (p. 15). A few paragraphs later, Belknap remarks wryly: "It is very strange that we may not preach on the same subjects which are recommended to us as subjects of prayer" (p. 18). Belknap excuses ministers from doing any manual labor on the grounds that their pastoral duties are more exhausting than bodily toil. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.
- 1797 David Tappan, Prof. at Harvard EX. 28:36, 38
- "A Sermon Delivered . . ." "The complexion of the times in which our lot is cast, renders the situation and duty of the clerical order in both hemispheres peculiarly serious and important. . . . On the one side they [the clergy] are assailed by an artificial and atheistical philosophy, which, in union with a deep and mighty system of policy, is aiming to subvert the moral and religious, as well as civil order of the



world; and as a step to this, is seeking to destroy the reputation and official existence of public christian instructors. On the other side they [the clergy] are opposed by a prevailing spirit of *practical* deism, which, while it ostensibly pays to christianity the tribute of cold belief or occasional ceremonious homage, spurns its vital principles, its most important and distinguishing marks" (pp. 28-29). Quite probably, with respect to the first threat, Tappan was thinking of the so-called "Order of the Illuminati," which was publicized in the following year by Tappan's good friend, Jedidiah Morse, as being the source of all contemporary civil and religious unrest. Tappan also spends a goodly portion of his Sermon branding popular accusations brought against the clergy as rumor. He warns against the folly of allowing unregenerate men to enter the Christian ministry. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1798 David Osgood, Medford

MATT. 13:33

"The signal advantages derived to the nations of Christendom from their Religion." Osgood maintains that the success of Christianity is sure, promoted as it is by the leaven of the Gospel. Predicting the coming millenium when all men of all nations will fully accept Christianity, he holds that, for the present age, the Gospel contributes to the good that is in the world, lessening vice and advancing human welfare. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS, YU.

1799 Eli Forbes, Gloucester

II COR. 6:3-4

"The Inoffensive Ministry Described." Recommending a careful and circumspect ministry, Forbes warns against systems of theology and barren speculation. The proof of Christianity's validity lies in its very mystery; were Christianity false, it would make a greater appeal to reason! Passing reference is made to the recent death of Jeremy Belknap. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1800 John Lathrop, Boston

1801 Joseph Dana, Ipswich

ROM. 1:16

"A Sermon Delivered . . ." Staunchly defending the "mysteriousness of Christianity," Dana presents his own fourteen-point system of theology as containing the essence of the Gospel, stressing throughout the mediatorial work of Christ. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS, YU.

1802 Peter Thacher, Boston

ROM. 1:9

1803 Thomas Prentiss, Medfield

LUKE 14:23

1804 Nathanael Emmons, Franklin

I COR. 1:10

"Unity of Sentiment among Christians, necessary to the Unity of Affection." Emmons states that God has given all Christians "an infallible rule of faith" in the Bible, this rule being "a complete and connected system." As for the right of private judgement, Emmons holds: "It is a right which all Christians have, to see with their own eyes, and to form their religious sentiments according to the infallible standards of truth. So that the proper exercise of this right will not *suffer* them to *differ*, but *constrain* them to see, and to embrace the same truths" (p. 11). Furthermore, "if there be a propriety in God's requiring Christians to be united in the belief of the truth, then there appears to be no propriety, in attempting to unite them in *affection*, without uniting them in sentiment" (p 17). It is fortunate that Emmon's ideas constituted a minority opinion, else the Convention might have been dissolved during the uneasy years of the Congregational-Unitarian rift. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1805 Zedekiah Sanger, Bridgewater

Is. 1:18

1806 Joseph Lyman, Hatfield

I COR. 11:1

"A Sermon Preached . . . ." Lyman combines his own high Christology with a theory of the complete benevolence of Jesus's every earthly act to instruct his (Lyman's) hearers in the duty and necessity of imitating the man of Nazareth. The clergy "will proffer and commend an holy example, gospel instruction and consolation, and a heavenly doctrine alike to the rich and the poor; for the Lord is the maker of them both, and is equally desirous that by our prayers and labours all men should come to the knowledge and obedience of the truth" (p. 21). A footnote on p. 23 of this Sermon sheds some light on the Convention's charitable ventures. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1807 John Reed, Bridgewater

MATT. 23:8-10

"A Sermon Preached . . . ." Reed urges a liberal view of the current theological controversy, pointing out that even the original Apostles were not always agreed on points of doctrine. Warning against censoriousness and calumny among members of the clergy, Reed asserts: "All those persons, who profess to believe the Christian religion, and live agreeably to their profession, are to be viewed and treated as brethren." AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1808 Daniel Chaplin, Groton

MAL. 2:7

"A Sermon Delivered . . . ." Chaplin holds that a minister must have an experimental knowledge of religion, together with enough learning to be able to read the Bible in the original languages (this being necessary to correct interpretation). Moreover, the minister must preach the whole of true Christian doctrine (an outline of which Chaplin supplies). Suggesting that political topics be henceforth kept out of the pulpit, Chaplin expresses hope that a revival of religion will soon be forthcoming. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1809 Samuel Spring, Newburyport

I THESS. 4:17-18

1810 Eliphalet Porter, Roxbury

II COR. 11:3

"The Simplicity That Is In Christ, and the Danger of Its Being Corrupted." Displaying a profound regard for the philosophy of John Locke (especially his *The Reasonableness of Christianity*), Porter thereupon proceeds to decimate the doctrine of the New Divinity men as non-essential to salvation: "True saving faith does not imply a full acquaintance with the truths of christianity; its only necessary implication is, that we cordially receive Christ as a teacher from God, and sincerely desire to be taught, governed, and saved by him. The idea, which some seem to entertain, that this proposition contains in it, the whole system of christian theology, in its various heads and divisions, . . . partakes too much of the mystick or cabalistic divinity to gain too much credit, and is indeed too extravagant to require a serious consideration" (p. 14). On the practical side, Porter suggests that church covenants be reviewed with an eye to the weeding out of unscriptural ideas. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, EI, HC, MHS, YU.

1811 Reuben Puffer, Berlin

COL. 4:11

"A Sermon Preached . . . ." Puffer sets forth a strong call for clerical unity, offering as proof of the urgency of the situation his belief that "finally, the aspect of the world loudly calls on us to unite. The present is a most eventful period. A crisis, highly interesting to the church and the world, is evidently impending. The eternal plan of Providence is in swift progress. Events long since predicted and celebrated in the

prophetic page, are rapidly unfolding. The mystery of God is soon to be finished" (p. 15). Puffer concludes by defending himself from any possible charge of being "enthusiastic": "Call not, then, by the odious name of enthusiasm, that zeal, that affection, which prompt the attempt to rescue those we love from everlasting burnings" (p. 19). AAS, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1812 Jedidiah Morse, Charlestown I TIM. 1:5

"A Sermon Delivered . . ." Morse distinguishes between three levels of doctrine, *viz.*: doctrines which are both necessary and infallible, those which are necessary but not infallible, and those which are neither necessary nor infallible. Warning that "we may believe too little as well as too much," he insists that all Christians must hold to doctrines of the first level (e. g., Christ's Atonement, repentance, and regeneration). The Sermon includes a description of the excellencies of the recently-founded Andover Theological School and a plea for support of the Massachusetts Charitable Society. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS, YU.

1813 John Kirkland, Pres. of Harvard TIT. 2:11, 14

1814 Jesse Appleton, Pres. of Bowdoin II TIM. 1:10

1815 Charles Stearns, Lincoln JOHN 13:13

"A Sermon Delivered . . ." A remarkably charitable Sermon dealing with contemporary controversy, in which Stearns urges a scriptural rather than creedal unity. Decrying the "hydrophobia of controversy," he points out that both the "orthodox" (which term he dislikes) and the schismatics alike will have to let time resolve their problems. AAS, BPL, CON, HC, MHS, YU.

1816 William E. Channing, Boston IS. 2:4

"Sermon on War." In this Sermon (which went into three editions), Channing reminds the clergy of their duty to act as counselors of peace. He details the miseries of war (both direct and indirect), then passing on to a consideration of the passions and principles which generate war. As to the remedies for war (he approves of defensive warfare), Channing suggests that the ministers expose the fallacies of martial thinking, teaching their congregations that national glory lies in "equal laws and free institutions, in cultivated fields and prosperous cities, in the development of intellectual and moral power, in the diffusion of knowledge, in magnanimity and justice, in the virtues and blessings of peace" (p. 26). An extensive reflection on various arguments which have been urged in favor of war constitutes an appendix to the Sermon. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, MHS.

1817 Alvan Hyde, Lee II PET. 2:1

"The Nature and Danger of Heresy." Hyde herein gives vent to his feelings on Unitarianism: "Admitting, then, that the apostle had reference to Jesus Christ, it appears evident, that all who deny him, or discard his *essential divinity*, advocate what the text denominates heresy" (p. 10). Heresy, adds Hyde, issues from a natural depravity of heart, and heretics themselves are "no less exposed to the wrath of God, than they who live in wicked and immoral practices" (p. 15). AAS, BA, BPL, CON, MHS.

1818 Henry Ware, Prof. at Harvard JOHN 20:31

"A Sermon Delivered . . ." Ware presents religious faith as being not only valuable in itself, but also as constituting the ground of all morality. He charges Roman Catholicism with over-emphasizing the doctrine of good works, but holds that Luther laid too much stress on justification by faith. The essential element in

Christianity is belief in Jesus as the Christ. Ware hopes that doctrinal differences among Christians may lead to the discovery of hidden religious truths. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1819 Abiel Holmes, Cambridge

TIT. 1:7

"A Sermon Delivered . . . ." Holmes sets forth the episcopal duties of the Christian minister, particularly those of instruction and government. He holds that the congregational system is peculiarly congenial to the republican form of civil government. Of major importance is his plea that all church-parish difficulties should be resolved by ecclesiastical councils rather than by civil law courts. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS.

1820 Aaron Bancroft, Worcester

PHIL. 1:17

"A Discourse Delivered . . . ." After reviewing the career and death of the Apostle Paul, Bancroft calls upon the clergy to defend the same Gospel which Paul defended (rather than spend time and energy defending recent theological systems). He describes the changes wrought in "the Congregational way" by civil developments: "On the establishment of the civil constitution of Massachusetts, a new regulation took place in the election of a minister. The town or parish now has the right of choosing their religious teacher; with the parish is the civil contract made, on the parish only is it binding; and in the case of delinquency, the minister has his remedy only in course of law" (p. 22). Bancroft defends the rights of parish members who financially support the incumbent minister but who refuse to attend church. A footnote at the end of the Sermon remarks on monies received by the Convention through recent bequests. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, MHS.

1821 Elijah Parish, Byfield

LUKE 2:14

"A Sermon Delivered . . . ." Parish proposes to defend the thesis that "it is the design of God, by the gospel of Christ, to establish lasting peace throughout the world" (p. 3). "When pure Christianity shall cover the earth, avarice and revenge will be extinguished; ambition will be dethroned, and war expire" (p. 5). Thus, considering the multiplicity of philanthropic and benevolent interests which characterize the present age, Parish infers that war will never again oppress mankind. On the practical side, he asks that these doctrines be preached from the pulpits of the land, that the members of the clergy actively support the work of the several "peace societies," and that all efforts in education and legislation be bent toward achieving the total suppression of war. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

1822 Zephaniah Moore, Pres. of Williams

I COR. 4:1-2

"Stewards of the Mysteries of God," published in Boston in 1823. Holding that nature is inadequate to fulfill the task of revealing God's love for man, Moore states: "The mysteries of God, of which the ministers of Christ are stewards, are the sublime truths of the Gospels, the truths, which are comprised in the sacred Scriptures, and are distinctively called the doctrines of revelation" (p. 9). Moore says that it is only common sense that everything which is in the Bible should be accepted; furthermore, it is mandatory that these things should be faithfully taught. BA, CON, WC.

1823 Leonard Woods, Andover

II COR. 10:4

"A Sermon Delivered . . . ." Woods, an orthodox Congregationalist, calls for the use of moral suasion in place of un-Christian acrimony, that Christian unity may be recovered. Each cleric should ask himself: "How would the Blessed Jesus speak and act, were he in our stead?" Woods debunks the polemical preaching of the Protestant Reformation: "These excellent men appear sometimes to have forgotten,



that they were called to seek the *salvation* of their enemies, not their *destruction*" (p. 13). Woods holds that revivals of religion are proofs of God's benevolence. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS.

1824 Thomas Snell, Brookfield JER. 23:28-29

1825 John Pierce, Brookline II TIM. 4:5

1826 Charles Lowell, Boston ACTS 20:24

1827 Abiel Abbot, Beverly ROM. 14:19

"Ecclesiastical Peace Recommended." Abbot begins by remarking that he is following the traditional Convention usage of both leading the worship service and delivering the Sermon (which statement throws some light on Convention customs of that day). In pleading for a return to religious harmony, Abbot stresses the harm done to church and parish by the current controversy: "... it is a sadder sight to behold a divided church, a *family of Christ*; holy brethren by profession, but alienated from one another; listening to designing strangers; taking counsels apart; disrupting with bitterness on trifles, or on subjects inscrutable; the voice of clamor and wrath heard within the precincts of the sanctuary — confidence lost, and love extinguished — *receiving one another only to doubtful disputations*" (p. 9). Since the objects of religion are "practical rather than speculative," the ultimate goal of professing Christians should be full religious concord: "... we shall have a very erroneous notion of religious peace, should we think that it may be limited to our own sect, or to persons symbolizing with us in faith and forms. The relations of peace, as the gospel fixes them, look far and wide. They extend from church to church, from one denomination to another; and from the catholic church of christendom to the whole brotherhood of mankind" (p. 9). AAS, AUA, BPL, CON, MHS.

1828 Edward Griffin, Pres. of Williams NEH. 2:18

"A Sermon Preached . . ." Griffin sets up a program for both the clergy and laity in order that the millenium may be brought more quickly into being. He envisions New England as destined to become "the carrier of the Gospel for the western continent" (p. 8). Among other things, he suggests that Christians must give more of their property to Jesus Christ. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, MHS, WC.

1829 Lyman Beecher, Boston I TIM. 3:15

1830 Heman Humphrey, Pres. of Amherst JOHN 18:36

"The Kingdom of Christ." While clearly differentiating between "the kingdom of Christ" and "the kingdoms of this world," Humphrey is himself critical of any who would completely divorce Christianity from the realm of political interests: "Nothing is easier, than for those who would weaken the hold of religion upon the public conscience, to say, *the kingdom of Christ is not of this world*" (p. 8). Underlining the peculiar nature of citizenship in Christ's kingdom, Humphrey then delivers a scathing attack on "the new school of infidels" who "scoff as loudly and as grossly as Paine, and with as keen a malignity as Voltaire" at orthodoxy; such movements, notes Humphrey, must ever fail. AAS, AC, BPL, CON.

1831 John Codman, Dorchester EPH. 4:31-32

"Ministerial Courtesy." Codman presents a disarming appeal for a return to harmony among members of the Convention, drawing out at some length the parallel to the situation at Ephesus in Paul's time. Mutual kindness should be observed by the members of both parties with respect to their methods, manner of speaking through the medium of the press, mode of presenting controversial matters (or the avoiding of their presentation) in the pulpit, and in all problems of social intercourse with one



another. Codman draws attention to the annual Convention collection as one basis for union in a spirit of perfect and mutual kindness, inasmuch as benevolent awards are always made from such funds without distinction as to the recipient's theological persuasion. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, MHS.

- 1832 William Jenks, Boston
- 1833 Samuel Osgood, Springfield II COR. 2:15-16
- 1834 Samuel Gile, Milton II COR. 5:20
- 1835 Oliver Cobb, Rochester Ps. 102:16
- 1836 Brown Emerson, Salem
- 1837 Henry Ware, Jr., Cambridge
- 1838 Richard Storrs, Braintree ACTS 17:18
- 1839 George Blagden, Boston II Tim. 4:6
- 1840 Leonard Withington, Newbury JUDE 12
- 1841 John Nelson, Leicester II COR. 10:4-5
- 1842 Milton Braman, Danvers ACTS 17:11
- 1843 Joseph Field, Weston JOHN 18:37
- 1844 Daniel Dana, Newburyport MAL. 3:3
- 1845 Mark Hopkins, Pres. of Amherst ROM. 8:22, 19
- "A Sermon Preached . . ." Hopkins holds natural catastrophes to be God's method of impressing human minds with the reality and essence of the future world: ". . . as it is now, we have the materials from which to construct [a picture of] both heaven and hell" (p. 17). Hopkins' eschatological interests pervade the entire Sermon. AAS, BA, BPL, CON, WC.
- 1846 Alvan Lamson, Dedham II COR. 11:3
- "Congregationalism." Viewing Puritanism as the most significant event in modern history, Lamson upholds congregationalism as the best (because the simplest) form of church polity. This kind of polity, he avers, encourages moral and social reform, treats fairly both conservatism and liberalism, and promotes the growth of the individual spirit. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, HDS, MHS.
- 1847 Parsons Cooke, Lynn I COR. 15:45
- 1848 Ezra Gannett, Boston II TIM. 4:2
- 1849 Nehemiah Adams, Boston II TIM. 1:12
- "Assurance of Faith." Adams preaches that the truths of the Gospel are self-evident: "Neither theological seminaries nor the writings of learned men are so sure and safe a guide with regard to the essential truths of religion as the opinions of humble and pious believers" (p. 8). Should any minister "through constitutional infirmity of mind and excessive self-distrust" lose his own assurance of faith, he should cease being a minister. Considering the problem of pastors who, under the influence of German biblical scholarship, argue for variant interpretations of passages of scripture, Adams remarks: "A just retribution upon such a man would be, that he be appointed to preach before this Convention from the text assigned to him by vote of the body:

'I am set for the defense of the gospel.' A greater number than usual would, on that occasion, probably leave the house before the collection is taken up" (p. 14). Furthermore, states Adams: "There is more spiritual knowledge in Watts's Hymns for infant minds, than in all the writings of De Wette, Eichorn, Paulus, Kuinoël, and Schleiermacher" (p. 15). Reference is made to the recent death of John Pierce. AAS, BPL, CON, HDS, MHS.

1850 Edwards Park, Andover

I SAM. 15:29; GEN. 6:6

"The Theology of the Intellect and of the Feelings." Park takes these two types of theology, the former a system which is thoroughly self-evident and self-consistent, the latter a form of belief which embraces the substance of truth, and proceeds to show how they support each other. The theology of the feelings illustrates and vivifies that of the intellect; the theology of the intellect enlarges (and occasionally properly restricts) that of the feelings, bringing it into harmony with the constitutional demands of the soul. AAS, AUA, BPL, CON, MHS, YU.

1851 John Woodbridge, Hadley

Is. 40:13-15

"The Fallacy of A Priori Conclusions Concerning God." Quoting Locke, Edwards, Reed, Brown, and Kant at length, Woodbridge argues from the premise of the infinitude of God that man cannot fully describe or comprehend the Deity. Quoting Channing ("one of our own"), he argues moreover that evil exists only with God's permission, and that the general nature of God's interests makes human comprehension of His benevolence difficult. The Bible, he adds, requires men "to exercise adoring submission, in view of those divine purposes and dispensations, the *reasons* of which we cannot perceive" (p. 18). AAS, BPL, CON.

1852 George Putnam, Roxbury

ROM. 2:15

1853 John Todd, Pittsfield

II COR. 11:3

"Tendencies of Intellectual Preaching." Todd begins by affirming the right of the intellect to appear in the pulpit, lest, otherwise, the world fall prey to "formalism, medievalism, or spiritualism." However, the American scene has changed since Todd's own youth; instead of being trained by ministers, candidates for the ministry are now educated in seminaries where there is "no food for the sympathies." Most depressing of all these changes is the current tendency among clergymen to attempt to compete with the lecture platform, thereby succumbing to the lure of intellectual novelty. "I appeal to our daily city papers, and ask if it be not humiliating, to see how the pulpit has to watch each event, spread sail to every blow of the wind, and advertise how it will do this and that! So we have great sermons on political questions, on railroads, great water sermons, and casualty sermons and all that. One would almost imagine that a great blow-up or break-down was a real God-send to the pulpit; and that all manner of out-of-the-way plans were proper, by which to tickle the ear, even for a moment, of the multitudes who are rushing over the earth" (pp. 14-15). Todd ends his Sermon with an appeal to the clergy to "cling to the cross." AAS, BPL, CON, MHS.

1854 Edward Hitchcock, Pres. of Amherst

GEN. 2:7

"The Religious Bearing of Man's Creation," printed in Hitchcock's *Religious Truth Illustrated from Science in Addresses and Sermons on Special Occasions*, published in Boston in 1857. As a geologist, Hitchcock argues for the reconciliation of science and religion, setting forth his verification of the accuracy of the Mosaic chronology. Science, he avers, gives the lie to materialistic concepts which would sink man to the level of the brute beasts, provides a refutation of both atheism and pantheism

by giving evidence of the existence of God, and strengthens the doctrine of "special creation." AAS, AC, HC, HDS.

1855 Samuel K. Lothrop, Boston I COR. 15:22

1856 Seth Sweetser, Worcester MATT. 13:33

1857 William Stearns, Pres. of Amherst II COR. 2:16

"Who Is Sufficient for These Things?" Stearns points out that because ministers are the interpreters of God, they should therefore be considered as ranking above ordinary teachers of morality. Through the ministrations of the clergy, mankind is to be restored to a perfect estate. The relation of the ministry to the rest of humanity is a vital one, involving the fall as well as the salvation of many individuals. The clergy can meet their grave responsibility only through simplicity, deep sincerity, through study of the Scriptures, and intelligent exposition of the Gospel (i. e., Truth). Prayer also is essential. AC (ms.).

1858 George Ellis, Charlestown Is. 55:11

"The Reaction of a Revival Upon Religion." Ellis asks the churches to adopt the more winning aspects of revivalism: its return to the Bible, its quickening of the searching spirit, and its approach to the sensibilities. Theological systems might well be replaced with this new form of "Gospel Grace," he suggests. AAS, AUA, BPL, CON, HDS, MHS, YU.

1859 Austin Phelps, Prof. at Andover Is. 42:5-6

"The Oneness of God." Beginning with an attack on the views of Voltaire with respect to texts, Phelps argues that natural and moral law are essentially identical. This prompts him to assert that science will never be a threat to revealed religion. There will always be "mysteries" in the latter which science will never be able to penetrate or explain. The Sermon betrays the contemporary interest in spiritualism. AAS, BPL, CON, MHS.

1860 Emerson Davis, Westfield Ps. 18:30

1861 John Morison, Milton MATT. 16:25

1862 Samuel Buckingham, Springfield MATT. 12:20

1863 John P. Cleveland, Lowell NEH. 5:7

1864 Cyrus Bartol, Boston II COR. 5:19

1865 Fast Day observed because of the death of President Abraham Lincoln — No sermon preached.

1866 Amos Blanchard, Lowell MATT. 13:31-32

1867 Frederick Hedge, Brookline ROM. 15:1

1868 Seth Sweetser, Worcester JOHN 17:17

"The Progress of Truth dependent on Correct Interpretation." Sweetser holds that the Bible is complete and perfect revelation, requiring only proper Christian interpretation. "The progress of truth is not by the discovery of new truths, but by a knowledge of truths not comprehended" (p. 9). He feels that German scholarship, despite its findings, has added little or nothing toward helping the individual Christian to incorporate Jesus's principles in his own life. Even so, he would not discourage men from devoting time and energy to science: "The science that detects, arranges,

and clarifies the facts in nature, and educes its laws, presents one of the noblest aspects of the high endowments of the human mind. But the science of God in redemption is greater. Nothing is in the end to be feared, but much to be hoped for, from research into the secrets of the material world. The day of the just ascendancy of the truth of God, in the clear understanding and application of it, will witness the harmony of all knowledge" (p. 22). AAS, BPL, CON, HDS.

1869 James Means, Dorchester ROM. 10:15

1870 Alonzo Quint, New Bedford MATT. 10:42

1871 Alexander McKenzie, Cambridge PROV. 23:23

1872 Andrew Peabody, Cambridge JOHN 17:21

"Union in Diversity." Apologizing for the brevity of his Sermon (for he is a substitute for the elected speaker), Peabody states that doctrinal unity among the members of the Convention is irrecoverable, and that therefore they should seek such unity as may be desirable and possible in terms of "loyalty to Christ." Orthodox and Unitarian alike are agreed upon the essential needs of humanity; "... the Unitarian will not alter a single feature of the Christian character as depicted by Watts or Doddridge; nor will the prelatist fail to recognize the marks and numbers of a Christian in a saint portrayed by Baxter or Bunyan" (p. 7). In sum, Christian unity "is to be effected by no lateral movement toward one another, but by the centripetal movement of all toward Christ" (p. 11). AAS, HDS.

1873 Gordon Hall, Northampton EPH. 4:15

1874 George Briggs, Cambridge MARK 12:37

1875 Edward E. Hale, Boston I COR. 1:26-28

1876 William Tyler, Amherst JOHN 12:32

1877 Rufus Ellis, Boston LUKE 17:5

1878 Edwin Webb, Boston I COR. 13:9-12

1879 Julius Seelye, Pres. of Amherst ROM. 8:19

In this untitled Sermon, Seelye argues the connection between the Biblical doctrines of "Creation" and "Redemption." He suggests that a proper understanding of "Nature" (made plain to man through the efforts of science) reinforces man's knowledge of and belief in the connection of these doctrines. Contemplating death and decay in organic and inorganic matter, Seelye holds that the future "new creation" will be a state free from such material corruption, this because our human bodies at that time will be adopted into the imperishable body of God. AC (ms.).

1880 Andrew Peabody, Cambridge MATT. 24:35

1881 Joshua Wellman, Malden I CHRON. 21:24

1882 Joseph Osgood, Cohasset LUKE 18:8

1883 Reuen Thomas, Brookline PHIL. 3:12

1884 Brooke Herford, Boston PS. 77:5

1885 Edward Atwood, Salem EX. 28:2

1886 George Briggs, Cambridge PROV. 27:19

- 1887 John W. Harding, Longmeadow PROV. 17:6  
 "Historical Sermon . . ." Cf. the section of this bibliography which deals with histories of the Convention. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, EI, HDS, MHS.
- 1888 Henry Patrick, West Newton EPH. 5:19
- 1889 David Gregg, Boston Ps. 78:41
- 1890 James DeNormandie, Roxbury JOHN 17:21
- 1891 Wolcott Calkins, Newton ROM. 15:16
- 1892 Bradford Fullerton, Waltham LUKE 18:1-9  
 "Congregationalism: The Final Church Polity." Holding that "the Church is that fraction of mankind that in a greater or lesser degree is trying to have the whole race recognize its divine sonship" (p. 4), Fullerton attempts to show how Congregationalism, though numerically small and imperfectly democratic, has modified the policies of Presbyterianism, Methodism, Episcopalianism, and Roman Catholicism. Fullerton argues that Congregationalism should avoid the two extremes of independency and centralization. "Democracy is the ultimate form of human government in the State. More and more it will be apparent that it is the ultimate form of ecclesiasticism among men" (p. 14). AAS, AUA, CON, HDS.
- 1893 Samuel Beane, Newburyport MATT. 12:6  
 "The Spirit Greater Than the Temple." Arguing for the interiorization of piety, Beane criticizes current trends which would regulate ritual and clerical dress. He sets up a dichotomy between Arian materialism and Athanasian spiritualization of faith, claiming Jonathan Edwards as the ideal figure in Christian Puritan thought (e.g., the triumph and transcendence of the human soul over the material world). Beane frequently quotes from the writings of John Robinson and Robert Browne to strengthen his own interpretation of Puritanism. AAS, AUA, CON, HDS, MHS.
- 1894 George Gordon, Boston LUKE 15:18
- 1895 Archibald McCullaugh, Worcester
- 1896 Howard N. Brown, Boston II COR. 3:18  
 "The Imitative Power of Human Nature."
- 1897 John Greene, Lowell
- 1898 Henry Jenks, Canton LAM. 1:4-5, 12, 17  
 HEB. 12:22-24

"Some Problems of the Country Parish." Jenks compares the present state of the rural parish (typified by the text from Lamentations) with the ideal state (typified by the text from Hebrews). One of the most difficult problems of today, he remarks, is the change in the concept of the Sabbath; no longer is it a day of worship and rest, for it has become a day devoted to recreation. Jenks blames the drop in attendance at Sunday morning worship services on the increased prominence given to Sunday Schools. Moreover, the rapid multiplication of churches has promoted a decline in clerical standards: "Men of weak ability, unable to succeed in other walks of life, take shelter in the ministry" (p. 15). This same multiplication of churches has also led to problems relating to the economic survival of the churches. "It is mortifying in New England towns, where once there was a strong, self-respecting, religious native population, to find to-day the Roman Catholic churches crowded to the doors, while all the Protestant



churches are sparsely attended . . .” (p. 19). As a solution to these difficulties, Jenks suggests that some plan of uniting the competing marginal churches in given towns be undertaken, even if it require some sacrifice in matters of ritual and dogma. AAS, AUA, CON, HDS.

1899 Benjamin Hamilton, Boston GAL. 5:1  
 “Christian Liberty.” Hailing Jesus as the one who has opened the doors of intellectual inquiry, Hamilton remarks: “To go beyond the truth as it is in Jesus is to run into a wilderness of error; to stop short of it is to halt in a thicket of ignorance” (p. 7). The crowning feature of true Christian liberty is hope. Of the modern Christian of the Congregational persuasion, Hamilton states: “. . . a world-consciousness has taken possession of his soul, and he longs to bless the race with his own inestimable boon” (p. 14). AAS, AUA, CON, HDS.

1900 Edward E. Hale, Boston  
 “The Pilgrim Covenant of 1602: A Covenant for the Churches of Today.” Hale stresses the word “together” as being the foundation of both the historic Scrooby Covenant and modern church covenants; then, he ties this keyword into his own conception of “commonwealth.” He feels that the Scrooby Covenant might well supply today’s churches with the single statement they need. Finally, he criticizes the common tendency among Protestants to exclude Roman Catholics from attempts at recovering Christian unity. AAS, AUA, CON, HDS.

1901 Arthur Little, Dorchester Ps. 145:4  
 “The Re-Appraisal of Our Inheritance.”

1902 Carleton Staples, Lexington LUKE 15:8

1903 F. L. Goodspeed, Springfield  
 “The Door of Opportunity Open to the Christian Church.”

1904 DeWitt Clark, Salem REV. 3:11

1905 Paul Frothingham, Boston  
 “The History of Preaching.”  
 Charles Carter, Lexington  
 “Duties and Principles of Preaching.”<sup>21</sup>

1906 John Denison, Boston  
 “Honesty of Thought.”  
 Benjamin Bulkeley, Beverly  
 “Congregationalism.”

1907 Albert Fitch, Boston  
 “The Historic Dignity of Congregationalism.”  
 Samuel Crothers, Cambridge  
 Same topic.

1908 George Martin, Lowell  
 “Progress thro’ Conflict.”  
 William W. Fenn, Dean of Harvard Divinity School  
 “The Ethical Insistence of the Mythical Strain.”

1909 F. E. Emrich, Brighton  
 “Church Unity.”  
 Edward Cummings, Boston  
 Same topic.<sup>22</sup>

1910 E. C. Moore, Prof. at Harvard

"Our Common Inheritance." Feeling that many factors which originally divided Unitarianism from Congregationalism are now dead issues, Moore suggests the real possibility of reunion. The Christological controversy is no longer any barrier, he states, for it has become evident that both parties were right, each according to its own interpretation. The basis for reunion lies in the mutual acceptance by both parties of the fact that Jesus differed from the rest of mankind only in degree.

Charles E. Park, Boston

"The Influence of Congregationalism on Our National Progress." Park enumerates the several national benefits which have had their source in Congregational practices, viz.: an educated and unfettered ministry, the founding of schools and colleges, religious journalism of a high order, altruism and philanthropy, high standards of preaching, together with a strong influence by Congregationalism upon the polity of non-congregational churches.

Both addresses printed in one booklet. AAS, AUA, HDS, MHS.

1911 Theodore Bacon, Salem

"The Practical Aspect of the Doctrine of the Trinity."

Edward Noyes, Newton

"The Present Attitude toward some points of Ancient Controversy."<sup>23</sup>

1912 John Platner, Prof. at Harvard

"The Service of Protestantism to the Intellectual Welfare of the United States."

Charles Billings, Lowell

"The Service of Protestantism to the Civic and Social Welfare of the United States."

1913 Howard N. Brown, Boston

"Some Unshaken Things That Remain."

Payson Drew, Worcester

"The Meaning of Congregationalism."

1914 Thomas Van Ness, Brookline

"The Trend of the Times."

Samuel Bushnell, Arlington

"Progress in Theology."

1915 Raymond Calkins, Cambridge

Roger Forbes, Dorchester

1916 Willard Sperry, Boston

Merle Wright, New York

1917 Abraham Muste, Newtonville

"H. G. Wells' Idea of God."<sup>24</sup>

1918 Samuel Crothers, Cambridge

"The Purposes of the Church in the First 100 Years."

Newton Hall, Springfield

"The New Spiritual Democracy."

1919 Samuel Eliot, Pres. of American Unitarian Association

"Our Common Pilgrim Inheritance."

Howard Chidley, Winchester

Same topic.

- 1920 Theodore Bacon, Salem  
 "Persecution of the Pilgrim in the Light of Present Events."  
 Frederick Page, Waltham  
 "A Message of 1620 to 1920."
- 1921 Abbot Peterson, Brookline  
 "The Wholesomeness of a Minister's Life."  
 Christopher Collier, Lexington  
 "The Underlying Unities."
- 1922 Samuel Cole, Pres. of Wheaton College, Norton  
 "The Spirit of the Living Creature."  
 Albert Dieffenbach, Ed. of *The Christian Register*  
 "The Living Creature in Action."
- 1923 Palfrey Perkins, Weston  
 "The Ministry of Reconciliation."  
 Vaughan Dabney, Dorchester  
 Same topic.
- 1924 Addison Moore, Chestnut Hill  
 "Precincts of Congregationalism."  
 F. E. Emrich, Boston  
 "Congregationalism."
- 1925 E. M. Slocombe, Lexington  
 An address portraying "some of the earlier characters and doings of the Convention."  
 H. F. Holton, Brockton  
 "The Idea of the Kingdom of God."
- 1926 Douglas Horton, Brookline  
 "The Idea of Worship," published in expanded form as "Two Notes on Worship" in *The Christian Register* in 1928. Horton describes worship as "a response, spontaneous and not readily delineable, which spiritually sensitive souls make to the presence of God" in which "the initiative . . . lies always with divinity." Even so, human volition is involved in worship, for one must will to pay attention to God. Horton then argues for richness of cultus, holding that the perfect service of worship is "full of color; the changing colors constantly woo attention; there is order and continuity in the changes; but the poise and lift of all are such as to carry the eye and the soul always toward God."  
 Henry Wilder Foote, Jr., Belmont  
 "The Austerity of Congregational Worship."
- 1927 Boynton Merrill, West Newton  
 "The Spiritual Nature of Man."  
 H. E. B. Speight, Prof. at Dartmouth  
 "The Reality of God."
- 1928 Samuel Eliot, Boston  
 "Puritan Principles in Modern Life."  
 Edward Noyes, Newton Centre  
 "Puritan Principles in Conduct."

- 1929 Maxwell Savage, Worcester  
 "Optional Independence."  
 Ashley Leavitt, Brookline  
 "The Spiritual Value of Independence."
- 1930 Henry H. Saunderson, Brighton  
 "Our Inspiration from the Pilgrims."  
 William Gilroy, Boston  
 Same topic.
- 1931 Edward Noyes, Newton Centre  
 "Whence Congregationalism?"  
 Palfrey Perkins, Buffalo, N.Y.  
 "Whither Congregationalism?"
- 1932 Russell Stafford, Boston  
 "The Affirmation of Religious Liberalism."  
 Simeon Cozad, Lowell  
 "The Responsibility of Leadership."
- 1933 Charles Joy, Lowell  
 "The Free Church of America."  
 Dwight Bradley, Newton Centre  
 Same topic.
- 1934 Willard Sperry, Dean of Harvard Divinity School  
 "The Congregational Tradition of Worship."  
 Dan Huntington Fenn, Exchange minister to England  
 Same topic.
- 1935 James L. Adams, Wellesley Hills  
 "Freedom of Fellowship."  
 Rex Stowers Clement, Boston (Presbyterian)  
 Same topic.
- 1936 Earl Davis, Petersham  
 "Democracy vs. Authority in Church and State."  
 Carl H. Kopf, Boston  
 Same topic.
- 1937 J. A. C. Fagginger Auer, Prof. at Harvard Divinity School.  
 "Certain Observations explanatory of the Conflict between Church and State  
 in Germany."<sup>25</sup>
- 1938 Russell Stafford, Boston  
 "Congregationalists and Church Union."
- 1939 Frederick May Eliot, Pres. of American Unitarian Association.  
 "Making Religion Contemporary."
- 1940 Charles E. Park, Boston  
 "The Congregational Heritage and Bequest."
- 1941<sup>26</sup>
- 1942

- 1943
- 1944
- 1945
- 1946
- 1947
- 1948 Samuel Eliot, Boston  
 "Our Congregational Pioneers."  
 William Gilroy, Boston  
 "The Future of Religious Independence."
- 1949 Frederick M. Meek, Boston  
 "Present Day Pressures on Protestantism."  
 George H. Williams, Prof. at Harvard Divinity School  
 "Frederic Henry Hedge, Ecumenical Unitarian," published in expanded form as *Rethinking the Unitarian Relationship with Protestantism: An Examination of the Thought of Frederic Henry Hedge (1805-1890)* by Beacon Press in 1949. In presenting Hedge as "a truly ecumenical Unitarian," Williams suggests that the broad-churchmanship of the sometime president of the American Unitarian Association might offer a basis for a revitalization of the Convention. Noting the recession of Protestant public influence in Massachusetts, he urges that this regional ministerium be reactivated (although in such a way that the denominational activities of the Unitarians and Congregationalists would not be in any sense jeopardized). AUA, BPL, HDS.
- 1950 Herbert J. Gezork, Andover Newton Theological School and Wellesley College  
 "The Totalitarian State and the Individual Conscience."  
 Frederick May Eliot, Pres. of American Unitarian Association  
 "The Prophet's Word and the People's Liberty."
- 1951 Palfrey Perkins, Boston  
 "The Challenge of Our Congregational Heritage."  
 Albert B. Coe, Pres. of Massachusetts Congregational Conference and Missionary Society  
 "The Church of the Future."
- 1952 Raymond Calkins, Cambridge  
 "The Dignity of Protestantism."  
 Charles E. Park, Boston  
 "Emergent Theology."
- 1953 Melvin Arnold, of *The Christian Register*  
 "Controversial Publishing."  
 Luther A. Weigle, Dean Emeritus of Yale Divinity School  
 "Preparing the Revised Standard Version."
- 1954 Erwin L. Shaver, Sec., Christian Education Division, Congregational Board of Home Missions  
 "Religion in Secular Education."  
 Robert Ulich, Prof. at Harvard  
 Same topic.



1955 Ernest W. Kuebler, Dir., Department of Education, Council of Liberal Churches, Inc.  
 "Church Union: Unitarian-Universalist."  
 Frederick W. Whittaker, Pres. of Bangor Theological Seminary  
 "Church Union: Congregational and Evangelical and Reform."

1956 Harold F. Worthley, Cambridge  
 "An Historical Essay: The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers."

Douglas Horton, Dean of Harvard Divinity School  
 "Theological Education in the United States." Taking his cue from recent publications on the subject of theological education, Horton begins by explaining the reasons behind the increased interest taken in religion by American college youth. He then gives some idea of the attendant problems relating to the educating of men for the ministry, a vocation which has become increasingly one preoccupied with administration. Finally, he envisions "the divinity school of the future," a "collegium bound together in Christ" which shall contribute materially to the broader religious life of the whole of Christendom.

1957 Nathanael M. Gupfill, Newton  
 "Confessions of a Grass Roots Ecumeniac." Speaking somewhat extemporaneously, Gupfill confesses first his great love for the Church, without which the vitality of Western civilization would be far less than it is. Calling for a "neo-liberalism" that would stress likenesses rather than differences among the different communions, Gupfill confesses his hope that the Convention may take its place in the ecumenical movement as a clarifier of theological language.

Wallace W. Robbins, Worcester

"William Law: Director for the Spiritual Journey — The Spiritual Disciplines of a Minister." Taking the English Non-Juror's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* as his starting point, Robbins commends Law's plan of self-discipline to modern clergymen. The happiest life, said Law, is that which seeks to serve God: it is a matter of intention rather than doctrine.

## FOOTNOTES

1. John Sherman of Watertown, cited in the first published list of Convention Preachers (the appendix to the Convention Sermon of Eliphalet Porter, 1810) as the Convention Preacher for 1682, may indeed have addressed some ministerial body in that year. However, for reasons given in this essay, we cannot agree that the Convention itself existed at that time. Rather, we agree with John Pierce (cf. the essay, fn. 11) who found cause to delete Sherman's name from his copy of the list of Convention Preachers.

2. The appendix to the Porter Sermon (cf. above) identifies the Convention Preacher for 1689 as Cotton Mather of Boston, citing Mather's text as having been "II Chronicles 15:2." This claim we reject on the same grounds as above. Furthermore, the content of Mather's 1689 sermon on this text indicates that it was preached, not before the Convention, but rather before the Governor, the Council, and the Representatives.

3. Samuel Moody, in his 1721 Election Sermon, remarks that he will not address the clergy since, on the next day, both he and they are to hear a sermon preached by "One who without Apology, may Instruct, Charge, Warn and Comfort, even the Eldest Ministers, as a Father his Children" (p. 59), a warm tribute to Increase Mather, the patriarch of the New England clergy.

Pierce's copy of the 1821 *Historical Sketch* (cf. the essay, fn. 10) notes: "According to Dr. Sewall's journal, it was voted 26 May, 1720, a sermon should be preached annually to the ministers on the day following the Election. Accordingly Dr. Increase Mather was chosen first preacher; Rev. Solomon Stoddard second; & Dr. Cotton Mather third. 1721. Increase Mather, D. D. Boston Rev. 1.20. The first regular sermon. J. P." Contrary to the practice later followed, Stoddard was not invited to preach in 1722, the invitation instead being extended to the third preacher, Cotton Mather.

Hill (cf. fn. 10 of the essay) quotes Sewall as reflecting on Mather's sermon in these words: "Lord grant that thy ministers may more and more resemble angels, for their wisdom and holiness, zeal and activity in thy service; and stars for their light and influence" (I, p. 406).

4. The Harvard College copy of this sermon has the following note penned on the back of the title page: "Mem - This [here the words "I think" have been crossed out] was the second sermon preach'd to the Convention - . Dr. Increase Mather preach'd it first, anno 1721 - . These Convention-Sermons were preach'd privately, at Dr. Sewall's House, for several years - . As I remember, the first preach'd in Publick was that by Dr. Colman, anno 1728. When the Gen. Court met at Salem for the Election Oc. - so the Thursd. Lect. was preached at the usual Place; Dr. Colman there delivering his Ser. to the Convention." Unfortunately, the author of this memorandum (evidently an eyewitness) does not identify himself. We feel that this author, whoever he may have been, was slightly confused about the year of Colman's Convention Sermon (cf. fn. 8, below).

5. Three clergymen bearing the name "Peter Thacher" were eligible to have addressed the Convention during these years. The histories, however, concur in assigning the 1724 Sermon to Peter Thacher of Milton, who lived from 1651 to 1727. More will be said with respect to the other two "Peter Thachers" later in this list.

6. None of the lists of Convention Preachers cites any preacher for 1725, nor do any of the histories of the Convention give any indication as to whether or not the ministerium met in that year.

7. The published lists of Convention Preachers make only one citation for the years 1727-1737, namely, John Williams of Deerfield (1728). However, other sources indicate that the Convention met annually throughout this period.

The Harvard Divinity School copy of Harding's *Historical Sermon* (1887) contains a manuscript note listing Convention Preachers for the years 1721-1740. The author and date of this note are not known. In general, the note agrees with the published lists where it overlaps them, although it does not mention either Nehemiah Walter or William Williams. It is unfortunate that several of the entries in this note are nearly illegible.

It appears likely that the unknown author of this note had access to a source no longer extant, this source being Joseph Sewall's journal (cf. fn. 10 of the essay). Therefore, where Hill's quotations from Joseph Sewall duplicate the manuscript note, the citation in our present list is made in the customary manner; where Hill fails to cite Sewall, so that we have only the manuscript note to guide us, the citation is bracketed.

8. This was the first Convention Sermon to be given in public (cf. fn. 4, above; the unknown author who placed Colman's sermon in 1728 evidently erred by one year). Joseph Sewall noted: "May 29. Mr. Colman Preach'd the Sermon to the Ministers in Publick from 2 Thess. 3. 1. Brethren, pray for us. A considerable number of Ministers met again after dinner" (Hill, I, p. 440).

9. The same situation occurs in 1730 as does in 1725, there being no entry in any list of Convention Preachers. As in the earlier year, there is no indication as to whether or not the Convention met in 1730.

10. The manuscript note attached to Harding's *Historical Sermon* (cf. fn. 7, above) identifies the Preacher for 1731 as "Fisk" (or "Fiske"), citing the text as "Psalm 101:6." However, a line has been drawn through this citation, probably by the unknown author himself. It seems likely that the citation refers to Samuel Fiske of Salem who preached the Election Sermon in 1731. This leaves us with the same problem that we have for the years 1725 and 1730.

11. There are two possible candidates for 1733: Peter Thacher of Boston (1676/1677-1738/1739) and Peter Thacher of Middleborough (1688-1744), Peter Thacher of Milton having died in 1727. Either of the two surviving Peter Thachers would have been eligible to have been members and thus to have addressed the Convention.

12. Cf. Hill, I, p. 472.

13. There are two possible candidates for 1735, a father and son: John Hancock of Lexington (1671-1752) and John Hancock of Quincy (1702-1744). Although either father or son would have been Convention members in 1735, and thus eligible to preach the Annual Sermon, it seems more probably that the father, John Hancock of Lexington, was the Preacher.

14. Mr. Samuel Fiske of Salem was chosen Preacher for 1736. The Convention by this act showed its favor toward one who was then in danger of being dismissed by his church for what must be termed "un-congregational" ministerial bearing. Hill (I, p. 473) notes that the legislature censured the Convention for its action. Fiske did not fill the Preacher's post in 1736, however, and Colman took his place.

15. In his 1747 Election Sermon, Charles Chauncy remarks: "Custom might now demand an address to my fathers and brethren in the ministry; but as a sermon will be preached to the clergy tomorrow, by one who is in every way my superior, and from whom I expect myself to receive instruction, I shall in no wise apply to them than as they may be concerned in the exhortation to the people . . ." (p. 66). This tantalizing aside is our only indication that a sermon was preached before the Convention in 1747.

16. The Convention's official Minutes begin in this year.

17. Welsted took up the Preacher's duties when the first preacher, William Williams, unaccountably declined the honor.

18. Wigglesworth became the Preacher when the Convention's first choice, Thomas Foxcroft, asked to be excused from the task of delivering the annual Sermon.

19. Williams became the Preacher for this year when a Mr. Chipman declined the Convention's nomination.

20. Due to the precarious national situation in 1775, the Convention voted to omit taking up its annual collection in this year.

21. At the Convention meeting of 1904, it was voted to have two addresses every year, one by a Trinitarian Congregationalist and one by a Unitarian Congregationalist, with both groups being recognized in the service of worship as well.

22. A special meeting of the Convention was held on Dec. 20th, Forefathers' Day, in 1909, with Williston Walker and Samuel Eliot both addressing the ministerium on the topic: "Our Common Inheritance." Although these men might conceivably be listed as Convention Preachers, it seems preferable to reserve that title for those who have preached to the regular meeting. Cf. fn. 23, below.

23. A second special meeting of the Convention was held on Forefathers' Day (Dec. 18th) in 1911. J. Edgar Park spoke on "Pilgrim Theology and Modern Thought," and Francis G. Peabody on "Pilgrim Spirit and Modern Life." Cf. fn. 22, above, for reference to the first of these special meetings.

24. The second preacher for 1917 was unable to attend the Convention's meeting because of illness in his family.

25. In 1937, the Convention returned to its former practice of electing a Moderator, a single preacher, and then appointing others to take the responsibility for the worship service.

26. Ironically enough, the only real lacuna in the Convention records with respect to the Convention Preachers is this recent period of seven years. Attempts are currently being made to gather information concerning these years, the Minutes for which have been lost. Some time during this period, the custom was initiated of having one speaker address the Convention in the morning, and a second one at lunch.

## HISTORIES OF THE CONVENTION

Peter Thacher. *A Sermon Preached in Boston, February 12, 1795, in the Audience of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society*. Boston: Samuel Hall, 1795. AAS, MHS.

To this sermon is affixed an appendix entitled: "The History of the Origin and Design of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society. By a Member of it, who is not a Minister." The appendix gives support to the thesis that the Convention may be dated from the year 1692 (cf. the essay, fn. 12).

Eliphalet Porter. *The Simplicity That Is in Christ, and the Danger of Its Being Corrupted*. Boston: 1810. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, EI, HC, MHS, YU.

The appendix to this Convention Sermon constitutes the first published list of Convention Preachers (cf. the essay, fn. 11).

*An Historical Sketch of the Convention of the Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts; with an Account of its Funds; its Connexion with Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society; and its Rules and Regulations: MDCCCXXI*. Cambridge: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1821. AAS, AC, BA, BPL, CON, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

The MHS copy contains the invaluable handwritten notations made by John Pierce (cf. the essay, fns. 5, 10, 11, 29).

*Historical Sermon: Preached before the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers by Rev. John W. Harding, Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, in the Park Street Church, Boston, May 26, 1887. With an Appendix containing Additional Historical Matter, Lists of Officers, and Preachers of Convention Sermons*. Boston: Stanley and Usher, 1888. AAS, AUA, BA, BPL, CON, EI, HDS, MHS.

The HDS copy contains the anonymous notations concerning the Convention Preachers prior to 1741 (cf. the essay, fns. 35, 38; also the section of this bibliography dealing with Convention Sermons and Addresses, fns. 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, especially). Harding's Appendix is largely a review of the 1821 *Historical Sketch*.

Edward Everett Hale. *The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers*. Read before the Congregational Club, Sept. 25, 1890, and printed in *Unitarian Review* (Jan. 1891). This address was also privately printed, probably after it appeared in the *Review*. AAS, AUA, BPL, CON, MHS.

Hale rejects the then-current sentiment that the Convention should be dissolved. He proposes certain remedies for its weaknesses, viz.: the extension of Convention membership to include a lay member from each eligible church, together with a further extension of membership to persons of denominations not hitherto considered. Thus revitalized, the Convention might turn its attention to such problems as religion in public education, the oversight of learned journals, and nondenominational charities.

Christopher Rhodes Eliot. "The Boston Association and the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers: 1865-1900." Read before the Boston Association of Ministers, March 10, 1941. AUA (ms.), CON (ms.).

This paper relates a little-known incident in which the Convention promoted the rights of Unitarians to employ the title "Congregationalists" in describing themselves. Much of the data assembled here was used by Eliot in his later "History." (cf. below)

Christopher Rhodes Eliot. "History of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, from 1887 to 1941," *The Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, VIII, Part I (1947), pp. 17-36. Manuscript copies of this article are held by AUA. and CON.

Eliot devotes a large portion of his article to the role played by Edward Everett Hale in rescuing the Convention from threatened dissolution. This is also an invaluable source for information regarding Convention activities between 1928 and 1941.

Mention should also be made of the following items: the Convention Sermons by Joseph Lyman (1806), Jedidiah Morse (1812), and Aaron Bancroft (1820), all of which have footnotes referring briefly to the charitable interests of the Convention and to the ministerium's relationship to the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society. The Convention Address by George H. Williams (1949) contains, in its present published form, certain remarks on the general background and nature of the Convention. Other items contributing to a full understanding of the Convention are listed in the following section of this bibliography.

## OTHER RELIQUIAE OF THE CONVENTION

Increase Mather, C. Morton, Samuel Phillips, *et alii*. Letter signed "in the name and with the Unanimous Desire and Consent of the Ministers met at Boston 30d: 3m; 1695." Sent to "the Honorable Lieutenant Governour and the Council and Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay now Assembled in General Court." MSHA (Archives, vol. II, p. 90).

Cf. the essay, fns. 15, 16.

*Thirty Important Cases Resolved With Evidence of Scripture and Reason. [Mostly,] By several Pastors of Adjacent Churches meeting in Cambridge, New-England. [With some other memorable matters.] Now Published for General Benefit.* Boston: 1699. HC.

Following the material cited in the title (which is generally thought to have been compiled by Cotton Mather), there appears a declaration by a "General Meeting of Ministers from Diverse parts of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay," to the effect that the clergymen involved in that meeting (the Convention?) have vowed to uphold "all those Principles, which we apprehend Essential to the CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH-DISCIPLINE . . ."

Cotton Mather. *A Seasonable Testimony to the Glorious Doctrines of Grace, Now Many Ways Undermined in the World.* Boston: 1702. AAS, BA, HC, MHS.

Cf. the essay, fn. 21.

Cotton Mather. "A Speech made unto His Excellency, Samuel Shute, Esq; Captain General and Governor in Chief, in and over the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England" (broadside). Boston: 1717. MHS.

A brief speech of welcome to the new governor, containing as well Shute's reply to Mather and the clergy.

*The Testimony of the Pastors of the Churches in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, at their annual convention in Boston, May 25, 1743. Against several errors in doctrine, and disorders in practice, which have of late obtained in various parts of the land; as drawn up by a committee chosen by the said pastors, read and accepted paragraph by paragraph, and voted to be sign'd by the moderator in their names, and printed.* Boston: 1743. AAS, BA, CON, HC, MHS, YU.



With this *Testimony* begins that unhappy chapter in the Convention's history when controversy over revival theology and practices, fired to a white heat by Joshua Gee's antipathy to the anti-revivalists in general and to Charles Chauncy in particular, threatened to lead either to the dissolution of the Convention or else to the creation of a rival body. It appears that Chauncy was foremost among those who urged the adoption and publication of this *Testimony*. In part, the statement reads: "As to Errors in Doctrine; we observe, that some in our Land look upon what are called *secret Impulses* upon their Minds, without due regard to the *written Word*, the *Rule* of their conduct; that none are *converted* but such as *know* they are converted, and the *Time when*; that *Assurance* is of the *Essence* of *saving Faith*; that *sanctification* is no *Evidence* of *Justification*, with other ANTINOMIAN and FAMILISTICAL Errors, which flow from these: all which, as we judge, are contrary to the pure Doctrines of the Gospel, and testified against and confuted, by Arguments fetched from *Scripture* and *Reason*, by our Venerable *Fathers*, in the Acts of the *Synod* of August 1637: as printed in a Book entitled, *The Rise, and Reign, and Ruin* of ANTINOMIANISM &c, in NEW-ENGLAND" (p. 6). The disorders cited include the encroachments made upon the rights of settled ministers by itinerant preachers (whether ordained or not), lay exhortation, ordination without the candidate's having a specific charge, the splitting away from churches of members who have become followers of an itinerant (whether ordained or not), acrimonious criticism of church members and of the clergy by malcontents, and like revivalistic excesses. Signed by the Moderator of Convention, Nathanael Eells.

Joshua Gee. *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Nathanael Eells, Moderator of the late Convention of Pastors in Boston; containing some Remarks on their Printed Testimony against several Errors and Disorders in the Land.* Boston 1743. AAS, BA, HC, YU.

As spokesman for the pro-revival group, Gee launches an attack upon "the stile and title" of the *Testimony*, basing his argument upon the fact that the Convention is a "merely occasional" gathering of the clergy, and that, as such, the Convention can not legislate but only advise. Paraphrasing and quoting Cotton Mather extensively, Gee urges that the Convention has "no decisive power," so that the title and content alike of the *Testimony* are misleading. He claims that some who voted for the *Testimony* were not eligible to vote, and that, furthermore, the total number voting was not sufficient to give a true consensus of clerical opinion. He defends "Mr. Whitefield's work", and champions the validity of the conversion experience as manifested in revivals. Gee concludes by calling for the meeting of a "pro-revival convention" on the day following Commencement.

Attached to the BA copy of this *Letter* is a clipping from the June 24, 1743 issue of the *Boston Evening-Post*, being a brief public letter in which Charles Chauncy, as chairman of the committee which produced the original *Testimony*, defends the title page as having been approved by the Convention.

Benjamin Prescott. *Letter to the Reverend Joshua Gee, in Answer to His of June 3, 1743. Address'd to the Reverend Nathanael Eel, Moderator of the Late Convention of Pastors in Boston.* Boston: 1743. AAS, HC.

Charging Gee with chronic dissatisfaction, Prescott upholds the *Testimony* as a fair representation of ministerial opinion. He debates the question as to whether or not Gee himself actually qualifies as a Convention member, since he (Gee) had voluntarily withdrawn from its meetings some years previous. Prescott holds that visiting pastors from outside the province have always been permitted out of courtesy to vote in Convention, that only six such outsiders attended the 1743 meeting of the Convention, and that only two voted on the *Testimony*. Defending the Convention from Gee's

accusation that it was too small to be representative, Prescott states that the 1743 meeting was "as full an one as has been seen for many years." He closes with his own version of the sequence of events leading up to the adoption of the *Testimony*.

John Hancock. *An Expostulatory and Pacifick Letter By Way of Reply to the Rev'd Mr. Gee's Letter of Remarks, on the Printed Testimony of the late Convention of Pastors in Boston, against several Errors and Disorders in the Land: Address'd to the Rev'd Mr. Nathanael Eells their Moderator.* Boston: 1743. AAS.

Hancock lays the blame for the controversy on a personal quarrel between Gee and Chauncy, insisting that no ministers (cf. Prescott's statement, above) from outside the province voted on the matter of adopting the *Testimony*. Hancock goes on to scold Gee for attempting to promote a rival "convention."

"J. F." *The Testimony and Advice of a Number of Laymen respecting Religion, and the Teachers of It.* Boston: 1743. AAS.

The anonymous author of this pamphlet traces the Convention's present difficulties to the fact that the New England clergy have welcomed into their midst "the grand Itinerant" (Whitefield). Such party zeal as is now being displayed (to the detriment of the clergy in public opinion) is the first fruits of revivalism.

"J. F." *Remarks on the Reverend Mr. Joshua Gee's Letter to the Reverend Mr. Nathanael Eells, Moderator of the late Convention.* Probably printed in Boston circa 1743. AAS.

This pamphlet constitutes "J. F.'s" personal attack on Gee. Defending his own anonymity as being necessitated by Gee's choleric nature, "J. F." describes the original letter written by Gee to Eells as "the Offspring of a broken and disordered Mind . . ." (p. 7).

*A Resolve of the Honorable His Majesty's Council of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, relating to the Disorders on the Days of Ordination of Ministers; - with the Proceedings of the Convention of Ministers thereupon -.* Boston (?): 1759. MHS.

On Jan. 18, 1759, the Council requested the Convention to consider the problems described in the title of this leaflet. The report of the Convention (signed by Joseph Sewall as Moderator and A. Eliot as Scribe) points out that the Convention has the powers only of "Counsel, Exhortation, Rebuke and Persuasion," and that only the civil authorities have the power to suppress infractions of the civil order. However, the Convention agrees that there have been too many cases of "Feasting, Jollity and Reveling in Tow[ns] and light, irreverent Behavior in and near the Places of pub[lic] Worship, where our Ordinations are solemnized . . ." Therefore the Convention has voted a resolution condemning such excesses, and will ask that its resolution be read by some cleric during the fast preceding any future ordination.

Joseph Sewall, Charles Chauncy, Nath. Appleton, *et alii*. Letter from a committee appointed by the Convention "To His Excellency Francis Barnard Esq. Governor in Chief, the Honorable his Majesty's Council and House of Representatives in General Court assembled." Dated "June 23, 1767." MSHA (Archives, vol. 14, pp. 488-492).

The letter constitutes a petition to the provincial government for the establishment of a legally incorporated society, the duty of which society shall be the collection and disbursement of funds on behalf of the Convention for the relief of indigent "Widows and Orphans of the Ministers of the Gospel." The subsequent fortunes of this petition are noted on its last page, concluding with its withdrawal by the Convention on June 23, 1767.

Letter containing "An Address of the Ministers of the congregational Churches in the Province at their annual Convention in Boston, May 30, 1771, to his Excellency Thomas Hutchinson Esq." MSHA (Archives, vol. 14, pp. 630-631).

The letter conveys the Convention's congratulations to Hutchinson upon his having become governor, even though it is "a dark & difficult season." "Your intimate Acquaintance with the Principles & Practices of these Churches, of which you have long been an Ornament, and the friendship you have ever expressed to their Ministers, leave us no room to doubt the continuance of your favor & protection." (Hutchinson's reply is given in the first volume of the Minutes of the Convention).

*Observation upon the Congregational Plan of Church Government, Particularly as it respects the Choice and Removal of Church Officers, supported by the Testimony of the Fathers of New-England, and unanimously offered to the Consideration of the Churches by the Convention of Ministers of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, at their annual Meeting in Boston, May 26, 1773, and continued by Adjournment to July 23.* Boston: 1773. AAS, BPL, CON, EI, HC, MHS, YU.

The goal of this publication is the preservation of "the Purity of the Ministry, and the Privileges of the Fraternity, both of which we are equally solicitous to support." Ostensibly a review of New England church polity, its major contention is that no church should depose a duly-elected officer (*viz.*, pastor) without the advice and support of an ecclesiastical council. Should deposition without council be allowed, "every Church will have a Constitutional Right, whenever they see fit, under the Pretense of Unworthiness and Delinquency of their Minister, after many Years of Faithful Service, to dismiss him from his Office, and resign him and His Family to seek a Maintenance from public Charity" (p. 8). Disclaiming the thought of "proposing any new Canon," or of imposing "upon the Churches any Opinion of our own," the Convention leans heavily upon citations from the Cambridge Platform of 1648 (stressing the difference between "independent" and "congregational" churches), John Cotton, Increase Mather, Hooker, Davenport, Norton, Owen, *et alii*.

*A Recommendation from the Convention of the Congregational Ministers at Boston, May 26, 1790.* Boston (?): 1790. BPL, HC, MHS.

Inasmuch as "destitute Flocks and Congregations" have often been imposed upon by "ignorant and vicious men" posing as teachers of religion, the Convention suggests (a) that all young men should have some formal theological training prior to taking a pulpit, (b) that churches should require references from would-be candidates which show that they have been thoroughly examined with respect to their knowledge of "natural and revealed Religion," so that they have genuine recommendation from "some regular Congregational Association or Presbytery," and (c) that all non-associated ministers take immediate steps to become members of regular associations.

Joseph William, Phillips Payson, Simeon Howard, Peter Thacher, and Jedidiah Morse. Letter to "Reverend Doct. Stiles, New Haven," dated June 21, 1790. HDS (photostat), YU.

The above-noted committee, appointed by the Convention, informs Stiles that the Convention has petitioned Congress to take "such measures as the Constitution may permit" to the end that no translation or edition of the Bible may be printed in the United States "without its being carefully inspected and certified to be free from Error." The Committee points out that "it is unquestionably of the highest importance that this acknowledged fountain of Truth be presented pure and uncorrupted. This will not probably be the case if the matter is left to the printers." Would not, then, "the General Association of Ministers in the State of Connecticut" assist the Convention by the sending of a like petition to Congress? The letter concludes: "We take this opportunity to

express our sincere desire to cultivate a friendly and christian intercourse with the ministers of your state, as we are firmly persuaded that such an intercourse between Christians of all denominations and sentiments would have a happy tendency to harmonize them — to remove unreasonable prejudices — to promote a spirit of love and candor — and thus essentially serve the interest of our holy Religion — It might also have a beneficial influence on the civil affairs of our country — .”

*Proceedings of the Convention of Congregational Ministers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; together with a Statement of the Number, and Names of the Congregational Associations, Ministers, Candidates, Vacancies, &c. in the Commonwealth; Letters of Correspondence with the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in other States, &c. Published by order of the Convention.* Boston: 1795. AAS, BA, CON, EI, HC, MHS, YU.

This report, which took five years to compile, details the successive steps taken by the committee in assembling and correlating the data which it contains. The correspondence referred to in the title is largely composed of letters sent to and from ministerial bodies in Connecticut.

*An Address, From the Convention of Congregational Ministers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to their Christian Brethren of the several Associations, and others not associated throughout this State.* Boston: 1799. CON, EI, HC, HDS, MHS, YU.

In typical jeremiad form, this *Address*, evoked by “the present decay of Christian morals and piety, and the awful prevalence of speculative and practical infidelity,” lists the several evils of the day, viz.: a “cold insensibility to” the duties of religion, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of public worship and the sacraments, too much negative goodness, and too much self-trust on the part of government. It is signed on behalf of the Convention by Eli Forbes as Moderator and Jedidiah Morse as Scribe. The HC copy contains the manuscript notation: “Drafted chiefly by Dr. Tappan.”

Reverends Willard, Hopkins, Reed, *et alii*. Circular letter, dated July 12, 1804, and sent on behalf of the Convention to all Massachusetts ministerial associations. MHS (this copy of the letter was sent to Joseph Lyman by Jedidiah Morse).

The letter informs the associations of the Convention’s receipt of a motion made by Joseph Lyman, viz.: that the Convention invite all such associations to elect one representative to attend a special “convention,” “for the purpose of forming and agreeing upon a plan of friendly ministerial union, and for establishing a general Association of Congregational Ministers . . . to convene annually . . . for the purpose of mutual aid, counsel, and encouragement in the discharge of the solemn duties of their sacred office; for better promoting the interests of christianity among the people of their charge, and for drawing more closely the bonds of christian union among the Ministers and disciples of our common Lord in other parts of his vineyard.” The Convention, through the medium of this letter, refers the motion to the several associations for their consideration.

*Report of a Committee appointed by the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, on the subject of War.* Auburn: 1816. HC.

The committee, appointed the previous year, since undertaking its work has observed the forming of the Massachusetts Peace Society, and hereby recommends that all members of the Convention join that Society. However, the committee feels it should publish its own findings on “war.” The committee holds that war is not an unavoidable calamity, and that the Old Testament conclusively proves God’s intent to establish a world-wide reign of peace on some future day (the New Testament being even more specific in this matter). The committee believes that the treaty which resulted



from the War of 1812 paves the way for future peaceful arbitration among disputing nations. The work and goals of the several "peace societies" are highly commended.

Copy of the agenda for the Convention's business meeting of 1819. AUA\*.

*Rules of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers. Adopted May 30, 1830.* Boston: 1831. MHS.

This first published edition of the Convention's rules is essentially the same as the version presented by Harding in his *Historical Sermon* of 1887.

Report of the committee appointed May 29, 1834 "to enquire into the origin and progress of the charitable fund of this Convention; and also of the fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society . . .," signed by John Pierce and Warren Fay, and dated May 27, 1835. AUA\*.

The text of this report is presented in Harding's *Historical Sermon* of 1887; the report itself sheds no real light of a particular nature on the origin of either the Convention or its funds.

*Report of the Committee on Slavery to the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts — Presented May 30, 1849.* Boston: 1849. AN, BPL, CON, EI, HDS, MHS, YU.

It was voted on May 31, 1849, that this report be published with the approval of the Convention, although that body does not stand responsible for the strict letter of the report. The report gives a full history of the institution of slavery in America and, as well, in other cultures; it sets forth Roman Catholic pronouncements on the subjects; it describes Scriptural references to the practice, and then considers the views set forth in Massachusetts colonial law. The report calls for a united witness against slavery, the while admitting certain difficulties of interpreting property rights under the Constitution. An appendix to the report attempts to prove, by reference to the "Madison Papers," that the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was largely opposed to the institution of slavery.

Edwards A. Park. *Remarks on an Article in the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review concerning a recent Discourse delivered before the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts.* Reprinted privately from the 1851 (Jan.) issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra and Biblical Repository*. HDS.

Park accuses his critic of misrepresenting his position; thereupon Park launches into a minute reworking of his Sermon, defending it from title down to conclusion.

*Reply to Prof. Park's Article.* Reprinted privately from the 1851 (April) issue of *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. HDS.

Park's critic confines himself, for the most part, to sarcastic remarks.

Rufus Ellis, Moderator of the Convention. Circular letter to "the Congregational ministers of our State," dated Jan. 31, 1878. BPL.

Ellis has been requested to suggest to his readers that they entertain the idea of attending the 1878 meeting of the Convention, at which an orthodox Congregationalist is to read a paper, and the Convention itself is to consider the possibility of urging a reunion of the Unitarian and Congregational denominations. "Why should not every New England village have again its *one* Congregational Church, with perhaps its right and left wings of membership, but with its undivided Christian mind, with its conservative men and its latitude men, perhaps, but with its one Christian ministry." In the meanwhile, Ellis would be happy to receive any suggestions which would forward this idea.

Bill of Complaint, issued 1882/1883. AUA\*.



Issued at the petition of the executor of the will of one Lorenzo Woodbury, to the end that the courts may decide whether Woodbury, a Trinitarian Congregationalist, in willing a sum to "The Massachusetts Association of Congregational Ministers," intended the bequest for the Convention or for the General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts.

Answer to the Bill of Complaint, issued 1882/1883. AUA°.

On behalf of the Convention, Henry F. Jenks submits his opinion that Woodbury probably intended the bequest to go to the General Association; however, the matter is left to the courts to decide.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated April 7, 1890. AUA°, CON.

The letter invites the churches to contribute to the Convention collection. "An annual gift of five dollars (\$5) from each Congregational (Trinitarian and Unitarian) Church in the Commonwealth" would allow the Convention to give its beneficiaries as much as does the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society to its dependents.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated March, 1891. AUA°, CON.

The message of 1890 is repeated; in the same mail, each minister is to receive a copy of Edward Everett Hale's 1890 speech about the Convention.

News item, from *The Boston Daily Advertiser*, dated May 20, 1892. BPL; also a copy attached to the front cover of the HDS copy of Harding's 1887 Historical Sermon.

Notice is given of the 1892 meeting of the Convention, to be held at South Congregational Church.

Printed order of exercises for the Convention meeting of 1892. HDS.

Herein, the 1892 meeting is designated as the "211th" meeting, indicating that the officers accepted Sherman's supposed 1682 sermon as a meeting of the Convention, despite Harding's refutation.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated Feb., 1892. AUA°, CON.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated March 1, 1893. AUA°, CON.

Here the Convention changes its tactics slightly, requesting the donation of "a small sum." The plea is reinforced by the citation of case histories of clergymen who have recently died, leaving their dependents in need.

Circular letter from the Central Committee of the Convention to churches whose ministers are eligible for Convention membership, dated 1894. CON, HDS.

The Convention solicits a gift of five dollars from every church. A brief historical note is appended to the letter.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated April 25, 1894. AUA°, CON.

Suggesting that the "stronger churches" can help to make up the required fund, the Convention in this letter provides blank spaces so that specific sums can be recommended to the individual churches.

Printed order of exercises for the Convention meeting of 1894. AUA°.

Circular letter containing the report of the committee appointed in 1894 to plan an annual religious census of the people of Massachusetts, dated May 15, 1895. AUA°.

A portion of the report, by Arthur Little, details the success of the "Dorchester plan," one method of taking such a census. C. A. Staples reports on the situation existing in rural areas, suggesting the creation of a "Christian League" which might embrace all denominations (concentrating on "the plain precepts of Christian morality and piety") and which thus could provide religious services for small towns.

Collection of correspondence concerning the trusteeship of the Judah Monis Fund, dated 1902-1903. AUA°.

By action taken by the Probate Court of Worcester County on August 4, 1906, the American Unitarian Association was made the trustee of the Fund.

Circular letter from the Convention to all ministers eligible for Convention membership, dated 1905. AUA°.

This letter, which was also sent out in 1906, asks for an *average* gift of five dollars per church, allowing that the size of the individual church should determine the size of its gift.

Circular letter from the Convention to "the Congregationalists of Massachusetts, Unitarian and Trinitarian;" dated May 1, 1911. AUA°.

This letter constitutes an appeal to the generosity of "a few of our stronger churches."

Letter from Arthur P. Rugg, writing on behalf of the custodians of the Supreme Judicial Court Room at the Massachusetts State House, to the Convention, dated May 22, 1920. AUA°.

Rugg politely refuses the Convention's request that it be allowed to meet in the Court Room as had been its custom to do some years before. The Convention, Rugg points out, has not availed itself of its prerogative for some time, and therefore has been assumed to have given up this right.

Report of a committee appointed by the Convention "to inquire into the expediency of petitioning the Executive to discontinue the observance of the State fast," no date given. AUA°.

The committee holds that such fasts should be proclaimed only on truly important occasions. This petition probably dates from sometime in the 1860's.

To the above list should be added the following miscellanea, all on file at AUA°: several communications between the Convention and the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society (all on minor matters), a series of individual reports by different Treasurers of the Convention, a collection of bank statements and cancelled checks, fragments of correspondence relating to the status of the Monis Fund in 1880, notifications of two bequests made to the Convention in 1883 and 1916, and copies of the agenda for the Convention's business meetings of 1920 and 1921.



## ANNUAL MEETING — 1957

The fifty-seventh annual meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held Monday, May 27, 1957 at the First Church in Boston. After a memorable New England dinner served by the ladies of the parish, the Society adjourned to the Edward Everett Hale Chapel.

The meeting was called to order by the president, the Rev. Duncan Howlett, at 7:20. The report of the treasurer, Dudley H. Dorr, was presented in his absence by Miss Doris Harrington. It showed a balance on May 1, 1956 of \$586.66, receipts during 1956-57 of \$146.45 for a total of \$733.11, expenditures during the same period of \$33.43, leaving a balance on April 30, 1957 of \$699.68. In addition the Society possesses a special account at the Cambridge Savings Bank to the amount of \$500.00.

The substance of the secretary's report being printed in the *Proceedings*, there was no separate report by the secretary.

In his president's report, Mr. Howlett spoke of the new function and format of the *Proceedings*, namely that it should be a journal of liberal religious history not limited to the papers presented to the Society, and including a book review section. He also described the Society's plan of holding Fall and Winter seminars on aspects of Unitarian history. Mr. Howlett reaffirmed the Society's intention of keeping business meetings to a minimum, the Executive Committee being charged with administering the affairs of the Society between annual meetings.

The report of the Nominating Committee was presented by Dr. George H. Williams of the Harvard Divinity School. Dr. C. Conrad Wright and Stephen Phillips were renominated for three year terms as directors. The Rev. Arnold Crompton, Th.D. of Oakland, Calif. and President Sidney E. Mead of Chicago, Ill. were nominated as honorary Vice Presidents. The other officers were renominated. On motion duly seconded the slate of officers was elected.

There being no further business the president declared the meeting adjourned at 7:30 and introduced the speaker of the evening, Dr. Sidney E. Mead, president of The Meadville Theological School, who spoke on "The Importance of Historical Studies for the Liberal Religious Movement."

Copies of the 1957 *Proceedings* were distributed to all present. Twenty-four new and renewed memberships in the Society were received.

Respectfully submitted,  
DAVID B. PARKE  
Secretary

## NOTICE

A limited number of back issues of the *Proceedings* are available on request. They will be mailed to members free of charge as long as the supply lasts.

Vol. XI, Part II — 1957

Douglas Horton, "The Scrooby Covenant"

Merle Curti, "Our Golden Age"

Bruno Becker (ed.), "Michael Servetus and Sebastian Castellio," a review  
by George H. Williams

Vol. XI, Part I — 1956

Benjamin B. Hersey, "The Universalist Church in America"

Stanislas Kot, "The Reformation in Poland"

Vol. X, Part II — 1954

David B. Parke, "Unitarianism at Antioch College, 1853-1953"

List of Officers and Members

Index to the Proceedings, Volume I-X

Vol. X, Part I — 1953

John E. MacNab, "Unitarians and Socialistic Ideas in the United States Prior to  
1860"

Anne Holt, "Some English Dissenters and their American Friends"

Vol. IX, Part II — 1952

John McKinstry Merriam, "The First Parish of Framingham, 1701-1951"

Melville C. Freeman, "The First Congregational Parish in Kennebunk, Maine,  
1750-1951"

Vol. IX, Part I — 1951

Earl Morse Wilbur, "How the History Came to be Written"

Harry C. Meserve, "The First Unitarian Society of San Francisco, 1850-1950"

Frederick Lewis Weis, "Apostolic Succession"

Vol. VIII, Part II — 1950

Charles G. Girelius, "Francis Adrian van der Kemp, Unitarian Pioneer"

Carleton P. Small, "Unitarianism in Maine"

Henry Wilder Foote, "The Historical Background of the Present King's Chapel"

Vol. VIII, Part I — 1947

Frederick May Eliot, "Tensions in Unitarianism One Hundred Years Ago"

Christopher Rhodes Eliot, "History of the Massachusetts Convention of Congre-  
gational Ministers, 1887-1941"

Alfred M. Brooks, "The First Parish in Gloucester, 1642-1942"

**THEOLOGY LIBRARY  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.**











BX  
9803  
477  
1958  
V. 12:1

THEOLOGY LIBRARY  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

441274



